



4th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

15 – 19 September 2008, Antananarivo, Madagascar

“Flyway Conservation at Work – Review of the Past, Vision for the Future”

**REPORT OF THE 4th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES (MOP4)
TO THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRD AGREEMENT (AEWA),
15 – 19 SEPTEMBER 2008, ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR**

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. On behalf of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Tourism of Madagascar, the Master of Ceremonies welcomed dignitaries, delegates, observers and invited guests, and introduced opening statements from the Executive Secretary of AEWA, the Executive Director of UNEP and His Excellency the Minister of Environment, Forests and Tourism.

2. The Executive Secretary of AEWA (Mr Bert Lenten) expressed his honour and pleasure in addressing the opening of the 4th Meeting of the Parties (MOP4). He recalled the theme of the meeting ‘Flyway Conservation at Work – Review of the Past, Vision for the Future’ and noted that the MOP would be reviewing achievements under the Agreement for the first time. Since MOP3 (Senegal, 2005) several major reviews of AEWA’s work had been implemented, including a review of the Status & Trends of species covered by the Agreement. Of 522 species with known trends, 41% showed declines. Threats during annual migrations included loss of habitats, and emerging threats, notably climate change. The draft *AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017* tabled at MOP4 for adoption, provided a vision for the future and, if we were able to implement it fully we would halt and reverse the declines, but this would only be possible with substantially increased resources. Eighteen months ago, Madagascar had become a Party to AEWA, however at MOP3, the Government of Madagascar had already given a clear signal of its commitment to the Agreement by offering to host MOP4. Madagascar was known worldwide as a biodiversity hotspot and waterbirds were part of that biodiversity. The Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had taken a decision to halt the decline of global biodiversity by 2010 but many doubted this would be possible. MOP4 provided a chance to increase efforts towards that goal, especially in Africa.

3. In a video statement, the Executive Director of UNEP (Mr Achim Steiner) extended a warm welcome to MOP4, noting that Madagascar seemed a very appropriate host country due to the efforts of the country’s President and people for biodiversity conservation. MOP4 was an important meeting, not only for AEWA but also for wider global discussions on how we could conserve biodiversity, especially migratory species, which in many ways served as an ‘early warning’ for the state of the environment. We needed to maintain flyways and the conditions along them to allow migratory species to survive. MOP4 had the opportunity to provide both the Agreement and the public at large with vision and hope, not only for AEWA, but also in the wider context of the Millennium Development Goals. Two key elements for success would be ensuring public awareness and increasing the number of Range States that become Parties to the Agreement.

4. His Excellency the Minister of Environment, Forests and Tourism of Madagascar, Mr Harison Edmond Randriarimanana expressed his country’s honour and pride in observing that its efforts over the years were being recognised at international level by the attendance of so many delegates at MOP4. He extended a warm welcome to Madagascar and the city of Antananarivo and pledged every effort to provide a pleasant stay and a glimpse of his country’s natural beauty.

Madagascar's initiative to host MOP4 was confirmation of its desire to increase efforts to improve conservation of migratory waterbirds, which were proof of the close ties between Madagascar and other Parties to AEWA. Hosting the MOP was also a source of motivation and challenge as Madagascar tried to attain its own development goals. At the 2003 IUCN World Parks Congress, the President of Madagascar made a commitment to raising the extent of protected areas from 1.7 million hectares to 6 million hectares, in line with the IUCN goal of 10% of national territory. This commitment was also set out in the Madagascar Action Plan, an ambitious undertaking defining the country's priorities, including care of the environment, for the period 2007-2011, against the backdrop of the Millennium Development Goals. Madagascar was faced with more and more alarming environmental problems, yet the country was unique in terms of climate, geography and biological diversity. It constituted part of major migratory corridors for marine mammals and waterbirds. Madagascar was firmly set on better managing its exceptional heritage and would take all necessary measures to implement the decisions and guidance emerging from the MOP.

5. The Minister suggested that more attention should be given to African flyway studies and to strengthening waterbird conservation in both the Africa and Asia sub-regions. He also hoped that AEWA would help develop a stronger network of protected sites at a flyway scale. Finally, in declaring MOP4 open, he extended his thanks to all those who had made the meeting possible, especially those countries, institutions and organisations that had provided financial and technical support.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

6. The Chair of the AEWA Standing Committee (Mr Erasmus Tarimo, Director of Wildlife, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, United Republic of Tanzania) conveyed greetings from his country and thanked the Government and people of Madagascar for hosting MOP4. Recalling childhood experiences that inspired his own commitment to wildlife conservation, he underlined the daunting task of achieving effective protection and management of wildlife, especially of those species that cross boundaries. Meeting this challenge required active international fora, to ensure that international obligations were translated into national policies and action. Referring to payment of dues, he noted a certain irony that those Parties with lower contributions were those most in arrears. The Government of Tanzania saw payment of its dues as a matter of principle and called on all those Parties in arrears to pay their annual dues promptly. At the same time, it was important that those Parties in a position to do so should be generous and contribute more.

7. Wishing delegates a productive meeting and an enjoyable stay in Madagascar, he urged all participants to be active and to be good listeners and contributors; only in this way would the MOP succeed.

8. The Executive Secretary referred to document AEWA/MOP 4.2 *Rules of Procedure* confirming that these were exactly the same Rules of Procedure as adopted at MOP3. However, as a result of certain requirements of the present meeting, two minor amendments were proposed for adoption:

Rule 21: to be amended to read: "At the commencement of the first session of each ordinary meeting, a President and *one or more Vice-Presidents* shall be elected...".

Rule 25: to be amended to read: "At the first session of each ordinary meeting, the President of the previous ordinary meeting *or the Chair of the Standing Committee* shall preside until...".

9. Egypt proposed two further amendments:

Rule 40, paragraph 1: to be amended, in accordance with Article 6 of the Agreement, to read: "...the decision shall, as a last resort be taken *by a two-thirds majority vote* of the Parties present and voting...".

Rule 9, paragraph d): to be amended, recalling Articles 6, 8 and 9 of the Agreement, to read: "Any item proposed by a Party, the Standing Committee, the Technical Committee or the Secretariat *relating to the fundamental principles of the implementation of the Agreement*".

10. The meeting adopted these amendments by consensus.

Agenda item 3. Election of Officers

11. The Chair of the Standing Committee recalled that, in accordance with the amended Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure, a Chair and one or more Vice-Chairs were to be elected.

12. Mauritius proposed Madagascar as Chair of MOP4. This proposal was seconded by Switzerland and Mali.

13. Norway proposed Senegal, the host of MOP3, to be the first Vice-Chair. This proposal was seconded by Switzerland.

14. South Africa proposed Switzerland as the second Vice-Chair. This proposal was seconded by Equatorial Guinea, France and others.

15. The Chair and Vice-Chairs were elected by acclamation and invited to the podium to conduct the meeting.

Agenda item 4. Adoption of Agenda

16. The Chair introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.3 Rev.2 *Provisional Annotated Agenda*.

17. Recalling Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Agreement, and Rules 9 d) and 12 of the Rules of Procedure (as amended), Egypt proposed the deletion of Agenda item 21 b) *Possible serial nomination of the Great Rift Valley as a World Heritage Site*. Egypt believed this item to be irrelevant to the mandate of the Agreement.

18. Mali sought further information about the area concerned, noting that Kenya might be able to say why it should, or should not be, nominated for World Heritage status.

19. Kenya requested clarification about the reason for the proposed deletion of this agenda item and wished to consult further with colleagues and stakeholders.

20. The Chair asked a small working group, to include Egypt, Kenya, the Chair and the Secretariat, to look into this matter and to report back to the meeting.

21. In response to a question from Equatorial Guinea the Chair confirmed that the Secretariat would act as rapporteur for MOP4.

22. Wetlands International proposed that the *Report on the implementation of the African-Eurasian Flyways GEF Project*, foreseen as Agenda item 29 during the morning of Friday 19 September, should be moved to come after Agenda item 15 on the morning of Tuesday 16 September, since the presentation clearly related to item 15 *Review of the AEWA International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008*.

23. This proposal was adopted by consensus.

24. Referring to a training session on negotiating skills for English-speaking African countries, the Executive Secretary confirmed that a report on this initiative would be provided under Agenda item 36 *Any Other Business*.

25. Noting that Egypt's proposed amendment would be discussed in a small working group, the Chair confirmed that the Agenda had been adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the other amendments tabled.

Agenda item 5. Establishment of Credentials Committee and Sessional Committees

26. Following an introduction to this Agenda item by the Chair and Executive Secretary, France, Kenya

Nigeria and Syria were elected by consensus to serve on the Credentials Committee.

27. No Sessional Committees were appointed.

Agenda item 6. Admission of Observers

28. The Chair introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.4 *Admission of Observers* and read out the list of Observers registered from Non-Contracting Parties, Intergovernmental Organisations, International Agencies, International Non-Governmental Organisations and National Non-Governmental Organisations. He invited the meeting to decide on the admission of the countries and organisations named.

29. Côte d'Ivoire pointed out that it was missing from the list of Non-Contracting Parties. The Chair confirmed that this omission would be rectified.

30. The meeting decided by consensus to admit as Observers all those countries and organisations listed in document AEWA/MOP 4.4, with the addition of Côte d'Ivoire to the list of Non-Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 7. Opening Statements

31. The Chair noted that written Opening Statements from Contracting Parties, IGOs and NGOs would appear in the final report of the meeting. Non-Contracting Parties who wished to take the floor were invited to make brief oral statements.

32. The following Non-Contracting Parties expressed their intention of adhering to the Agreement as soon as possible and provided details of the current status of the legal and administrative processes required:

- Angola
- Botswana
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Ethiopia
- Liberia
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Somalia
- Swaziland
- Zambia

33. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States, France noted that many Member States had ratified the Agreement, most recently Italy. The EU would continue to encourage Member States to become Contracting Parties if they had not already done so. It was gratifying to hear the statements made by Non-Contracting Parties from Africa. Delegates were invited to attend a reception hosted by the French Presidency of the EU on Wednesday 17 September.

34. The African Union expressed pleasure that most African countries were already Contracting Parties or on course to become Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 8. AEWA Award Presentation Ceremony

35. The Secretariat recalled that the AEWA Award was established by the Standing Committee in 2005 to recognise individuals and organisations who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation of

migratory waterbirds. This was the second occasion on which the AEWA Awards had been presented. The winners had been decided by the Standing Committee in June 2008 and announced on the AEWA website as follows:

Individual category

Mr Mark Anderson, South Africa, in recognition of work for the conservation of Lesser Flamingos at Kamfers Dam, Kimberly, South Africa.

Institutional category

OMPO - Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique Occidental, in recognition of its long-standing support of AEWA.

36. The recipients were presented with their Awards by the Chair of the Standing Committee, to acclamation from the meeting.

37. Mr Mark Anderson and the representative of OMPO, M. Guy-Noël Olivier speaking on behalf of OMPO's President M. Raymond Pouget, made brief addresses summarising elements of their work in the framework of the Agreement and thanking AEWA for recognising the efforts made. Both drew attention to the importance of innovative partnerships in dealing with the challenges of waterbird conservation, at site and international levels, respectively.

Agenda item 9. Implementation of the Agreement and Action Plan

38. The Secretariat presented document AEWA/MOP 4.5 *Synthesis of information provided by AEWA Parties through national reports on implementation of the Agreement for the triennium 2006–2008*.

39. The rate of submission of National Reports had been slightly lower than for the previous triennium, with a 64% reporting rate for the Agreement Area as a whole, 50% for the Africa region and >70% for Eurasia. Further National Reports arrived after the deadline for submission and could not be included in the analysis. The summary contained in the document was the interpretation of the Secretariat, based on 38 National Reports of highly variable quality and was confined to easily quantifiable sections of the National Report. In many ways, the International Reviews required under paragraph 7.4 of the Action Plan provided a stronger background for prioritisation and decision making by MOP4. The new Online National Report Format would help to overcome some of the difficulties encountered by AEWA Parties.

Agenda item 10. Report on phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands

40. The Secretariat introduced the following documents:

AEWA/MOP 4.6 Rev.1 *Synthesis of information provided by AEWA Parties on phasing out lead of lead shot use for hunting in wetlands*

and

AEWA/MOP 4.7 Rev.1 *Phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands*

41. Document AEWA/MOP 4.7 Rev. 1 had been produced on the basis of the International Implementation Priorities established by MOP3. It was actually an update of a report produced by Wetlands International in 2000 and had been compiled from information received from 78% of Contracting Parties and 31% of non-Contracting Parties.

42. The survey showed that only 18% of countries had fully phased-out the use of lead shot in wetlands. A further 8% had partly phased-out lead shot. All legislative bans to date were in EU and non-EU Eurasian countries, with none implemented by African countries so far.

43. Key issues that still needed addressing included awareness raising and dealing with concerns about technical aspects, availability and cost of non-toxic alternatives to lead shot.

44. The Secretariat had also reviewed 70 relevant scientific articles published since 2000. These highlighted two key issues: (a) concerns about lead poisoning and the environment were not confined to wetlands and waterbirds; (b) the use of lead weights (sinkers) for fishing was also a significant source of lead-poisoning of waterbirds.

45. Recommendations based on the report were contained in document 4.7 Rev.1 *Phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands* and this served as the basis for draft AEWA Resolution 4.1 Rev.1 *Phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands*.

46. Finally, following-up on AEWA Resolution 2.2, the Secretariat had distributed a questionnaire to countries that had already phased-out lead shot. A brochure on this topic was being planned, in cooperation with the Technical Committee, for publication towards the end of 2008.

47. In response to a question raised by France, the Executive Secretary confirmed that draft Resolution 4.1 would be discussed by the Technical and Scientific Working Group on Tuesday 16 September. A second Working Group, on Financial and Administrative matters, would deal with non-technical draft Resolutions. Based on input from the two Working Groups, proposed revisions to draft Resolutions would be tabled for consideration in Plenary Session later in the meeting.

48. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia noted that it imported its lead shot from European countries, mainly EU Member States, so suggested that AEWA should extend its policy recommendations to cover international import-export of lead shot.

49. BirdLife International was dismayed to hear that 70% of responding countries felt they had not yet obtained sufficient information and education material on this issue. The matter had been discussed for many years and the details were well known; it surely couldn't be that difficult to produce the simple information materials required.

50. The Executive Secretary recalled the efforts already made by AEWA to produce information material, but acknowledged that it apparently wasn't reaching the target groups in many cases. Greater outreach efforts would be needed in close cooperation with hunting organisations such as CIC and FACE. He asked all of AEWA's partners to help in this effort.

51. Mali pointed out that most hunters are located in isolated areas and that special means would be required to contact and inform them. Perhaps a special group could be established to work with the Secretariat on tackling this problem.

52. Tunisia underlined the need for a constructive dialogue with hunters, especially to inform and convince them of the feasibility of alternatives to lead.

53. OMPO reminded delegates that the Technical Committee had conducted a great deal of work on providing advice and information to the Meeting of the Parties regarding the need to introduce alternatives to lead shot. It was true that things were not proceeding very quickly towards the phasing-out of lead shot and that failure to eliminate lead from wetlands could result in a complete ban on lead shot. AEWA ought to adopt a stricter approach to this issue, which was in the interests of birds and therefore of hunters as well.

54. BASC noted the need to consider this issue in the context of legislation controlling the use and deposit of lead elsewhere in the environment and food chain, for example in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive. Such legislation would ultimately be influential in determining the future for lead shot, which looked to be increasingly short.

55. The Executive Secretary recalled the need to make a distinction between Africa and Europe concerning the degree of organisation and dispersal of hunters. In Africa there was a major problem with the availability and cost of alternatives to lead. The incentive to change was not strong and there was a great deal of misinformation – for example, concerning damage to guns from alternatives to lead. AEWA was trying to work with weapon manufacturers, hunters and legislators. Although it was unlikely the problem would be solved within the next 10 years, progress was being made and this review was a good means of seeing the current situation and what had to be done.

56. The representative of Burkina Faso noted that many European hunters visited his country. They were aware that lead shot was banned in their own countries and that they should also use alternatives in Burkina Faso. However, non-toxic shot was not available and there was no demand nationally. This problem needed resolving.

Agenda item 11. International Reviews

11 a. Conservation status of migratory waterbirds in the Agreement Area

57. The Secretariat introduced documents AEWA/MOP 4.8 *Report on the conservation status of migratory waterbirds in the Agreement Area, 4th edition* and AEWA Res. 4.2 *Responding to the need to improve knowledge of the status of and factors causing declines of some waterbird populations*.

58. The report contained in document 4.8 was one of the seven international reviews required by paragraph 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan. As in the case of previous editions, this edition was prepared by Wetlands International, and supported by a small grant from the European Commission. The Technical Committee had been asked to suggest a new structure for this 4th edition; consequently, two new features were included: a Red List Index prepared by BirdLife International and an analysis of waterbird population trends in Europe for 1974-2005, compiled from International Waterbird Census data.

59. Key findings included:

- There are estimates of population size for 98% of AEWA's 522 populations, but the quality of many estimates remains low, especially in the Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and East Europe subregions.
- Trend estimates are available for 71% of populations.
- The quantity and quality of population and trend estimates is highest in Northern and Western Europe, where there are long-established monitoring schemes.
- Between the 1st (1999) and 4th editions, the % of populations for which trends are available has increased from 59% to 71%.
- At sub-regional level, knowledge on population trends is least well-developed for Asia.
- The number of declining populations has remained about the same, but the number of increasing populations is lower. The highest proportion of declining populations is in the Asia sub-region, where the number of declining populations is five times greater than the number of increasing populations.
- Of 22 families covered by AEWA, 11 have 50% or more of their populations in decline; 7 families have 35-100% of populations with unknown trends, and 4 families are in both groups.
- The Red List Index calculated by BirdLife International (as the official IUCN Red List Authority for birds) shows that AEWA species are less threatened than all species globally, but that their status between 1988 and 2008 has deteriorated faster (though the decline has levelled off in the last four years). Nevertheless, a relatively high number of AEWA species and populations are Red Listed: 16% of species and 12% of populations. 17 species are Near Threatened, 12 Vulnerable, 5 Endangered, and 4 Critically Endangered (Slender-billed Curlew, Siberian Crane, Northern Bald Ibis and Sociable Lapwing).
- One key message is that we are gradually increasing our ability to describe status and trends, but still very limited in our ability to explain them. This greatly hampers successful implementation of conservation measures.

60. The Status Report identified a number of priorities for further work, including:

- Better monitoring – especially through strengthening of the International Waterbird Census, which needs expansion of site coverage in all countries and to other parts of the year. Special surveys are also needed for species not covered by the IWC methodology
- Internationally coordinated monitoring of productivity and mortality.
- Better understanding of migrations and movements through analysis of ringing data, enhancement of ringing schemes (especially in Africa), and use of satellite telemetry for selected species.
- Improved knowledge of the causes of changes in waterbird status and trends e.g. through literature reviews, habitat-use analysis, satellite telemetry, research into decreasing and rapidly increasing populations.
- These all require greatly increased capacity building and resources.

61. The European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, welcomed the Status Report and was very pleased to have grant-aided its production. The Report represented a critical aspect of implementing the Agreement and would inform many important decisions. A great deal of detailed information could usefully be summarised as a set of indicators of progress, or lack of progress, in waterbird conservation throughout the Agreement Area. The Common Bird Index developed in Europe was one example of the type of mechanism that could be developed at Agreement Area and sub-regional levels as a powerful means of communicating with decision makers. It would be helpful if future editions of the Report could be produced earlier in the triennial cycle so that key findings could feed into the MOP as effectively as possible.

62. BirdLife International drew attention to a new initiative launched for Slender-billed Curlew. A meeting of the international Steering Group was planned for this autumn or early winter and the countries of the Mediterranean and East Europe sub-regions were urged to cooperate as much as possible with the Steering Group's work.

63. The Secretariat noted that the conclusions and recommendations from the Report had been used to draft Resolution 4.2 which would be discussed by the Technical and Scientific Working Group.

64. The Executive Secretary confirmed plans to make a brochure containing '10 key messages for policy makers' arising from the Status Report.

65. Wetlands International noted that this review had resulted in recommendations for changes to the status of species in the AEWa Action Plan (Draft Resolution 4.11). Concerning the proposal to improve the timing of the status review within the triennial cycle, one issue that had remained invisible was that many recommendations for status changes had not yet been taken up by Technical Committee and so did not appear in the Draft Resolution. This was mainly because of limitations on the information sources used, due, in turn, to chronic under-resourcing of the International Waterbird Census. In recent years, annual funding of about €50,000 had only been sufficient to cover one full-time staff member, which is far from sufficient for even the basics of a global monitoring programme. Analysis and reporting in a very short timeframe therefore relied on project funding. In spite of additional resources available through the WOW project and AI-related work, under-resourcing remained critical. WI recommended that this issue be discussed in both MOP4 Working Groups.

11 b. Hunting and trade legislation

66. The Secretariat introduced documents AEWa/MOP 4.9 *Hunting and trade legislation in countries relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to AEWa* and AEWa Res. 4.3 *Hunting and trade legislation*.

67. Document 4.9 was one of the seven international reviews required by paragraph 7.4 of the AEWa Action Plan and had been used as the basis for drafting Resolution 4.3 that would be discussed by the Technical and Scientific Working Group.

68. In brief, the recommendations of document 4.9 were to:

- Enhance implementation of AEWa
- Promote stronger enforcement measures

- Undertake a review through the Technical Committee of the relevant paragraphs of the AEWA Action Plan and to identify knowledge gaps
- Organise training workshops through the Secretariat.

11 c. The stage of preparation and implementation of Single Species Action Plans

69. The Secretariat presented document AEWA/MOP 4.10 *Review on the stage of preparation and implementation of Single Species Action Plans*

70. This was one of the seven international reviews required by paragraph 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan and was being presented to the MOP for the first time. Information was collated from questionnaires distributed to Range States. The average response rate was only 18%, so did not provide a very robust basis for conclusions. For some species, no questionnaires at all were returned.

71. The review covered 15 SSAPs, of which the first 7 were adopted in 1996 prior to AEWA's entry into force (Red-breasted Goose, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Marbled Teal, Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant, Slender-billed Curlew, Audouin's Gull), 3 SSAPs were approved by MOP2 in 2002 (Black-winged Pratincole, Sociable Lapwing, Great Snipe) and 5 SSAPs were approved by MOP3 (Light-bellied Brent Goose, Ferruginous Duck, White-headed Duck, Northern Bald Ibis, Corncrake).

72. From the first group, conservation status had improved for Audouin's Gull and Pygmy Cormorant, but the other species were not doing so well, especially Red-breasted Goose, which showed a three-fold decline for unknown reasons.

73. From the second group, there was good progress with the SSAPs for Sociable Lapwing and Black-winged Pratincole, but no action at all for Great Snipe.

74. For the third group of SSAPs, it was too early to speak of real implementation results, though the population of East Canadian High Arctic population of Light-bellied Brent Goose had shown a significant increase. Actions had been taken for the other four species, but the intensity of action was variable.

75. Overall, the level of implementation was strongly biased to Europe and especially to the EU Member States due to: (a) strong legislation; (b) a strong funding mechanism – the LIFE programme; and (c) biodiversity being considered a high priority in contrast with countries with developing or transition economies, where priorities were different.

76. Other factors included species distribution (size and degree of restriction), availability of groups of committed organisations or individuals, and the degree of cooperation between governments and NGOs.

77. Concerning other initiatives that were developing and implementing SSAPs (or similar plans), there was well-established cooperation with CMS, the Bern Convention and the EU; developing cooperation with CAFF and the Barcelona Convention; and potential for cooperation with the Abidjan Convention, Nairobi Convention and Regional Seas Conventions. Among NGOs there were established partnerships with BirdLife International, Wetlands International and WWT, while potential relevant partners included WWF and Conservation International.

78. The review recommended, *inter alia*, that:

- The EC should retain SSAPs as a basis for LIFE funding.
- SSAPs should be promoted as a reference for international donors.
- Implementation efforts should continue to focus on the principle of Key Range States for each species.
- The development of National SSAPs should be the basis for increased cooperation between governments and NGOs.
- Ongoing positive cooperation between governments and NGOs should be maintained.
- International Species Working Groups should be established and/or strengthened.

- The potential for cooperation between AEWA and other international instruments should be explored.
- AEWA should seek to engage WWF and CI in AEWA SSAP implementation where applicable.

79. BirdLife International referred to the SSAP for Northern Bald Ibis and noted that BirdLife was in negotiation to become SSAP coordinator. The International Advisory Group for the Northern Bald Ibis (IAGNBI) had already carried out valuable work and it was hoped that this group would advise on and feed into the new SSAP.

80. Morocco reported that a National Action Plan for the Northern Bald Ibis was being prepared in cooperation with the organisations involved. A workshop in January 2008 led to a Vision and Objectives being established. A restricted Working Group was set up to prepare an operational Action Plan to be drafted before the end of the year.

81. OMPO commented that members of the Technical Committee would not be surprised to hear OMPO stress again that two key elements were missing: (a) analysis of ringing data; (b) genetic analysis. When drafting a SSAP, great detail is required; how could this be done without ringing and genetic data?

11 d. Re-establishment projects

82. The Secretariat introduced the following documents:

AEWA/MOP 4.11 Review of waterbird re-establishment in the AEWA Area

and

AEWA Res. 4.4 Developing international best practice for the conservation of threatened waterbirds through action planning and re-establishment

83. The Secretariat noted that this was another of the seven international reviews required by paragraph 7.4 of the AEWA Action Plan. It was being presented to the MOP for the first time, and had been prepared by The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT, UK). Some of information had been collated from Range State questionnaires, but information from other sources had also been used.

84. Among the conclusions of the report were:

- 6 species have SSAPs within which re-establishment is one of the measures suggested (of these only the SSAP Maccua Duck has not yet resulted in action for re-establishment).
- Most of these SSAP re-establishments have failed to result in self-sustaining populations.
- Varying levels of success have been achieved for some species, e.g. Corncrake.
- Of 59 other initiatives reviewed, 15 have re-establishment provisions.
- The level of detail and comprehensiveness is highly variable – especially in SSAPs.

85. In addition:

- An AEWA meta-database on this issue has been established.
- 14 re-establishment projects have been assessed against the IUCN Guidelines; compliance varied from 23 % (White-headed Duck in Hungary) to 88% (for Corncrake in the UK). Only three projects were deemed successful: Corncrake in UK, White Stork in Netherlands and White-headed Duck in Spain. There was a positive correlation between compliance with IUCN Guidelines and the eventual success of the re-establishment projects: the closer the IUCN guidelines were followed, the more successful was the re-establishment project.
- Factors affecting success include: completion of a comprehensive feasibility study, pre-release acclimatisation of birds to release areas, availability of good quality habitat where causes of decline have been eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level; long-term financial and political support; identification of long-term and short-term indicators of success against which to measure progress.

86. Based on these findings, the report set out a number of recommendations, which formed the basis for draft Resolution 4.4.

87. Referring to all of the reviews presented under Agenda item 11, Equatorial Guinea noted the significant burden that implementation of findings and recommendations would place on AEWAs focal points. This would require enhanced working conditions for the focal points.

88. The representative of Switzerland noted that the White Stork had also been re-established successfully in his country and that the breeding population was still increasing. Efforts to augment the Western European population had also been made by other Range States.

11 e. The status of introduced non-native waterbird species

89. The Secretariat introduced the following documents:

AEWA/MOP 4.12 *Review on the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof, 2nd edition*

and

AEWA Res. 4.5 *Introduced non-native waterbird species in the Agreement Area*

90. The Secretariat noted that document AEWAs/MOP 4.12 was a 2007 update of the earlier review presented to MOP1 in 1999. It was one of the seven international reviews required under paragraph 7.4 of the AEWAs Action Plan and was prepared by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), on the basis of Range State questionnaires. There had been an encouragingly high rate of questionnaire returns (77%).

91. Among the findings were the following:

- In the AEWAs Agreement Area 32 species of non-native waterbirds have been introduced that have bred more than five times in the last 20 years. Nearly 50% of these have increasing populations. Only one population is declining, due to human intervention.
- A total of 27 non-native waterbird species have been recorded breeding one to five times or with breeding suspected but not confirmed.
- The species involved are mainly Anatidae and most non-native introductions are in North and West Europe.
- No consultations were carried out prior to any of the introductions examined.
- Hybridisations with native species are known or suspected for 18 introduced non-native waterbirds. These are mostly rare events, but significant in the case of Mallard hybridising with Yellow-billed Duck and Meller's Duck, and Ruddy Duck hybridising with White-headed Duck.
- Direct impacts include: competitive exclusion or aggression, eutrophication of water bodies (seven species); damage to natural/seminatural habitats (six species); damage to crops (three species); predation of eggs or chicks of native species (one species).
- Indirect effects include preventing the accurate monitoring of naturally occurring birds of the same species.
- At least 17 species have established self-sustaining populations in the Agreement Area that are increasing, three rapidly (Greylag Goose, Greater Canada Goose, Egyptian Goose). One of the 17 (Sacred Ibis) is so-far localised but increasing rapidly so may become a widespread species.
- Of 57 countries reporting on legislation, 54% reported legislation in place, often in the last 20 years, so past introductions were often legal, since they occurred before legislation was in place. In addition, legislation is often not stringent enough or enforced vigorously.
- Several control schemes have been implemented for a limited number of species and with limited success.
- The most complete eradications have been in Austria (Black Swan) and Iceland (Ruddy Duck).
- Local scale control schemes have had little overall effect.
- A large-scale but costly eradication scheme for Ruddy Ducks in the UK is showing strong signs of success and the species has also been virtually eliminated in Spain.

- Constraints on resolving problems include: public opposition due to lack of awareness; poor knowledge of population sizes and trends; limited funding for this issue; lack of mechanisms in many countries to prevent non-native introductions; limited understanding of the magnitude and significance of impacts; and the fact that in some cases, legislation intended to protect native wild birds may also cover introduced non-native species.

92. Recommendations based on these findings were reflected in draft AEWA Resolution 4.5, which would be discussed by the Technical and Scientific Working Group.

93. Mali underlined the importance of taking into account the socio-economic context, for example where local communities rear and release birds for subsistence purposes.

94. Germany questioned the wisdom and feasibility of close monitoring of avicultural collections underlining the huge administrative effort this would require for limited benefit.

95. The UK referred to the weblink¹ contained in the UK National Report that could be followed to obtain the latest information on the Ruddy Duck control programme. The programme had been accompanied by a public awareness campaign, considered crucial to attaining public understanding. A key lesson learned was that it is most efficient and cost effective to undertake control at an early stage before populations become established.

96. Equatorial Guinea urged coordination with CITES among the other relevant bodies for this issue.

97. The African Union underlined the risks of new introductions when it is already known that some non-native species may cause concern.

98. France assured that its national efforts to control the Ruddy Duck would be maintained and enhanced. The draft Resolution needed to recognise the role that hunters can play in control of non-native species, while the MOP Report should highlight the findings of the study.

99. Tunisia stressed the need to strengthen participatory/community approaches, which may sometimes seem neglected by a more technical or scientific approach. Communities can be a rich source of information that may be missing from National Reports.

100. OMPO raised the matter of inconsistency between introduced populations of certain species (e.g. Greylag Goose and Canada Goose) that are classified by IUCN as Vulnerable because of their very low numbers, and the consequent risk of having an IUCN classification that is not in accordance with the aims of the draft Resolution.

101. Norway observed that hunting-based controls would be insufficient to solve the problem alone. It would be more efficient to have national bans on non-native introductions supported by proper documentation on the effects of introductions on native wildlife, as well as awareness-raising among bird keepers. This approach was being followed in Norway.

Agenda item 12. Establishment of an Implementation Review Panel

102. The Executive Secretary introduced AEWA Res. 4.6 *Establishment of an Implementation Review Panel*

103. He noted that the technical reports presented to the 2nd Plenary Session on 15 September under Agenda item 11 had previously been reviewed by the Technical Committee. However, the wish now was to establish an Implementation Review Panel under the aegis of the Standing Committee. The draft Resolution set out the proposed functions of the Panel. Emphasis would be given to coordination with other relevant international mechanisms to avoid overlap or duplication.

¹ http://www.nonnativespecies.org/Ruddy_Duck/index.cfm

104. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its 27 Members States, felt that the comments of the Executive Secretary went in the right direction. The EU believed that it would not be in the interests of efficiency and cost savings to set up a new subsidiary body and that the Standing Committee should indeed be in charge of the Review Panel. It would be useful to check with legal experts that the MOP had the mandate to extend the role of the Standing Committee in this regard. The EU was happy to see the emphasis on cooperation with other bodies and avoidance of duplication. Amendments to the draft Resolution would be tabled during the Working Group sessions.

105. The Executive Secretary confirmed his belief that there would be no legal obstacle to extending the Standing Committee's mandate, but indicated that he would consult with UNEP colleagues.

Agenda item 13. Official Opening Ceremony

106. The Official Opening Ceremony hosted by His Excellency the Minister for Environment, Forests and Tourism was held at the Carlton Hotel, Antananarivo, during the evening of Monday 15 September 2008.

Additional Agenda item: Revision of Agenda

107. The Vice-Chair from Senegal chaired both Plenary Sessions on day 2 of the Meeting.

108. The Executive Secretary introduced an updated version of the Agenda, AEWA/MOP 4.3 Rev.3. He reported that lengthy discussions had been held with Egypt and other African delegations concerning Agenda item 22 b), the title of which had been amended to read: *Strengthening of waterbird and wetland conservation capacity in Africa (draft Resolution AEWA 4.9 Rev.1)*. Other amendments simply reflected minor changes agreed in the first Plenary Session.

109. The meeting approved the revised agenda by consensus.

Agenda item 14. Reports by:

a) Standing Committee

110. The Chair of the Standing Committee introduced the document AEWA/MOP 4.13 *Report of the Standing Committee*. He recalled the Standing Committee's mandate and composition and noted that two meetings had been held since MOP3; financial constraints meant that it had not been possible to meet in 2007. The Standing Committee strongly recommended reconsidering the current arrangements for covering the travel and subsistence costs of eligible delegates.

111. The Standing Committee noted the efforts of the Secretariat to ensure that the Agreement's financial situation remained healthy, though there were serious shortfalls in certain areas, notably a shortage of €1 million in the UNEP-GEF Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project.

112. Other key issues dealt with by the Standing Committee during the last triennium had included the launch of World Migratory Bird Day, the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, the Communication Strategy, and the development of the Strategic Plan.

113. The Executive Secretary suggested that the Chair of the Standing Committee might convene informal regional consultations concerning the nomination of candidates for election to the new Standing Committee, which would be constituted at the end of the MOP.

b) Technical Committee

114. The Chair of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC), Mr Yousoof Mungroo (Mauritius) presented the document AEWA/MOP 4.14 *Report of the Technical Committee*. He described the activities of the TC to

implement its work plan for the 2006-2008 triennium and the results achieved. Two meetings had been held; in October 2006 and March 2008. At the latter meeting all documents for MOP4 had been finalised. The TC's work plan for 2006-2008 had been drafted by the Secretariat in conformity with the decisions of MOP3. Eleven separate tasks had each been taken forward by one of ten Working Groups. Ten of the eleven tasks had been completed; one task had been postponed to the next triennium due to lack of funds. The TC had produced 12 Resolutions and reviewed a further 13 documents (SSAPS, International Implementation Priorities, other reports and reviews), in preparation for MOP4 .

115. OMPO deeply regretted the severe lack of resources that AEWA suffered from and which had been clearly underlined by the Standing Committee and Technical Committee reports. If AEWA wanted to be more effective, it couldn't continue with a chronic lack of funds. AEWA was a dynamic and important Agreement and all potential means of funding, both governmental and private sector, should be investigated.

116. Congo agreed with OMPO and raised the issue of lack of funding for full translation of all meeting documents into French and the provision of interpretation. Francophone Parties were currently unable to participate fully in the Agreement and this was a serious problem.

117. BirdLife International noted that budgetary limitations meant that a large amount of the Technical Committee's work had to be conducted by correspondence, which was difficult for all members, given the huge volume of papers and often tight deadlines involved. The budget for the next triennium should provide enough money for a sufficient number of meetings and should place the least possible emphasis on voluntary contributions to support meetings.

118. Mali underlined the difficulties faced by national focal points in implementing their responsibilities under the Agreement and enquired what assistance might be made available.

119. Responding to the points raised, the Executive Secretary stated that the Secretariat's hands were tied, since it didn't have the financial resources available for more than two meetings of the subsidiary bodies during each triennium, or for more extensive translation and interpretation. He noted that the scientific subsidiary body of the Ramsar Convention – its Scientific and Technical Review Panel – conducted its business in English only. However, it was not a question of will, but of resources; the Secretariat would be delighted to do more if the Parties would provide the funding necessary. If all such costs were included in the Core Budget, the budgetary increase would be well in excess of 50%.

c) Depositary

120. The representative of the Netherlands, speaking as the Agreement's Depositary, introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.15 *Report of the Depositary*, which gave an overview of the current status of the Agreement.

121. He noted that there were now 62 Ratifications, and that there would be 62 Entries into Force as of 1 November, when the Agreement would enter into Force for Estonia. There had been 10 new ratifications since MOP3, including Madagascar in 2007. The only reservation among these new ratifications was from Estonia and related to phasing-out of lead shot, for which Estonia had fixed a date of 2013. Finally, the Depositary noted the encouraging statements of 13 countries made during the 1st Plenary Session concerning their preparations for accession to the Agreement. Nevertheless important gaps in coverage in the eastern part of Eurasia remained.

122. The Executive Secretary called on all Parties to promote the Agreement among neighbours and colleagues in the regions.

d) Secretariat

123. The Executive Secretary introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.16 *Report of the Secretariat*. He introduced the AEWA staff structure and functions and summarised the Secretariat's work on:

- Policy development and implementation (e.g. development of the Strategic Plan as requested by MOP3).

- Management of financial and human resources (e.g. day-to-day management of the budget, fundraising, staff recruitment and application of the CMS Internship Programme).
- Maintaining external and internal relations (e.g. move to new Secretariat premises generously provided by the Government of Germany; strengthening of cooperation with other organisations; recruitment of new Parties).
- Information management (e.g. improvement of the AEWA website and establishment of web-pages for the AEWA Standing Committee and Technical Committee; organisation of regional workshops and meetings; World Migratory Bird Day).
- Implementation and compliance (e.g. work on International Implementation Priorities, Lesser White-fronted Goose SSAP; Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds; advisory missions; international reviews).
- Programme development (a new Secretariat unit dealing with e.g. development of projects to be submitted to potential donors).

124. With regard to fundraising, the Secretariat had secured €808,593 in voluntary contributions during the triennium, but this had been far from easy. The big challenges for the future were to find the missing €1 million for the WOW project and to fund AEWA Standing Committee and Technical Committee meetings adequately.

125. BirdLife International noted that the involvement of the Secretariat in advisory missions to sites in Tanzania and Bulgaria had been recognised as very valuable by all concerned. With regard to a third site, the Tana River Delta in Kenya, BirdLife hoped that the MOP would have the opportunity to hear an update on proposed developments affecting this site. Perhaps a task for the Standing Committee, in its new role relating to implementation review, could be to look at the situation in the Delta, which was of great importance for migratory waterbirds.

126. In response to concerns raised concerning Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 by the African Union, FAO, Mali, Niger and Tunisia, Wetlands International referred delegates to the issues that would be presented and discussed under Agenda item 27. It was important to emphasise that AEWA was heavily involved in identifying and clarifying the role of wild birds in the spread of HPAI H5N1.

127. The Executive Secretary noted that the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds included all UN agencies relevant to Avian Influenza, MEAs (including CBD, Ramsar, CMS and AEWA), and international NGOs (e.g. Wetlands International and CIC), and so covered all major players. The role of CMS and AEWA was simply to communicate information from the Task Force and make it available to Parties. Neither CMS nor AEWA was engaged in organising surveillance, which was a very costly activity under the responsibility of other bodies in the Task Force.

128. Sudan stressed the importance of extending awareness programmes and associated financial support with respect to surveillance for HPAI H5N1.

Agenda item 15. Review of the Implementation of the AEWA International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008

129. The Executive Secretary introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.17 *Report on the implementation of the AEWA International Implementation Priorities 2006-2008*. He recalled that there was no provision in the Core Budget for the implementation of International Implementation Priorities (IIPs). While €680,000 had been secured over the triennium, the required amount for complete IIP implementation would have been €5.2 million. Of 36 IIPs, 8 had been implemented or were currently being implemented. Thanks were due to all those funding bodies and implementing partners that had supported the IIPs.

130. Nevertheless, as noted under the previous Agenda item, there was a €1 million funding gap for the WOW Project, which had been identified as the principal means of implementing 15 of the IIPs. No funding at all had been forthcoming for 13 IIPs.

131. Wetlands International and FAO referred to IIP number 21, concerning satellite telemetry. Through the efforts of FAO and other partners, and in the context of avian influenza surveillance activities, considerable progress had been made on this topic and it could effectively be considered as covered. FAO confirmed that it would happily make available the manual it had produced relevant to this topic.

132. Belgium requested that publication of the 'Wader Atlas', approved by MOP1, financed by Belgium and currently being finalised, should be added to the list of IIPs as further funding was required to cover final production costs. A final draft of the Atlas was available from the Wetlands International website.

133. The Executive Secretary noted that the Wader Atlas could now only be considered for adding to the list of potential IIPs for the forthcoming intersessional period.

134. The Vice-Chair from Switzerland was shocked that delegates did not themselves appear more shocked to realise that the Agreement had only been able to implement 10% of the IIPs at most. What conclusions should be reached from this fact? Should the Agreement 'prioritise the priorities' and thus restrict the number of projects to the available means, or make greater efforts to raise funds elsewhere?

135. The Executive Secretary concurred that the level of commitment had been low compared with the list of proposed projects agreed at MOP3. However, he warned against downsizing the list, as a broad and flexible 'menu' allowed donors to select projects for funding that are of particular interest to them.

136. BirdLife International considered that the IIPs were essentially what AEWA was all about and hoped the lack of debate in response to the Vice-Chair's intervention would not prevent the funding gap for IIPs being tackled with great vigour. Perhaps some of the new IIPs could be given greater emphasis by the use of symbols to denote e.g. the most endangered species, thereby flagging the highest priority conservation projects.

Agenda item 16. Report on the African-Eurasian Wings Over Wetlands project

137. Wetlands International presented an overview of the WOW project noting that it had already been well received in other regions of the world as an example of flyway-scale conservation. The project had a vast scope, covering a region used by 300 million individual waterbirds dependent on a network of over 100,000 wetland sites.

138. WOW activities included:

- Improving access to information on the network of critical sites as a tool to support decision-making;
- Establishing a capacity-building framework;
- Enhancing communication and networking;
- Fine-tuning of activities to ensure they were regionally relevant, via Regional Hubs; and
- Demonstrating best practice at wetland sites in 12 countries.

139. WOW was a joint effort of multiple partners. It made a major contribution to AEWA by theoretically covering full implementation of 15 IIPs and had strong relevance to other IIPs. The original budget was US\$12 million with half of this provided by GEF. The project began in 2006 and had a four-year duration. Unfortunately, it appeared that the actual budget would be significantly less, and though efforts were being made to mobilise more resources, time was running short. Further details would be provided at the side event on WOW and were also available from the WOW website: www.wingsoverwetlands.org

140. In response to comments and questions from Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mali and Senegal, the Executive Secretary stated that WOW had been conceived in 1998/1999. The amount of money that was going into the demonstration sites was quite a limited part of the total budget, but seemed to attract most interest. Demonstration sites were supposed to highlight elements of best practice and to make results and experience available to all countries. The project had lost significant funding due to the adverse US Dollar – Euro exchange rate, and this had meant that the originally foreseen timeframe had needed to be reduced from 5 years to 4 years. In 1999 Wetlands International and BirdLife

International were asked to help identify potential demonstration-site projects. The number of proposals exceeded the available funding, so selection was made according to criteria such as membership of AEWA, Ramsar etc., and the demonstration potential of projects. It would be vital to fully implement the existing programme before thinking of further projects in other countries. There had already been signals from UNEP-GEF and the GEF Secretariat that there would be no further funding in future if the current project was not implemented in full.

141. Mauritania acknowledged the important role that WOW had played by enabling a demonstration project for the Banc d'Arguin.

142. Tunisia suggested that more emphasis should be given to supporting ringing of waterbirds through WOW in order to obtain the best possible information on flyways.

143. Wetlands International reminded delegates that AEWA was all about conservation of waterbirds and the sites they depend on, so when discussing the benefits of WOW, it was important to think of the whole flyway. The aim of demonstration projects was to selectively highlight approaches at sites that could be transferred to other stakeholders elsewhere in the flyway.

144. Germany urged those Parties in a position to do so, to consider assigning to WOW any 'end- of-year' money left over from international cooperation budgets.

145. Wetlands International thanked Germany for all the support it had given to WOW and made a plea for delegates to act on Germany's suggestion. In response to requests from several delegates, the WOW side event would show how countries not directly involved in demonstration projects could nevertheless benefit from the project as a whole.

Agenda item 17. Report on the implementation of the Communication Strategy

146. The Secretariat introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.18 *Overview on the status of the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy* recalling that the Strategy had been adopted through Resolution 3.10. There was no Core Budget provision for implementing the Communication Strategy, which therefore relied on additional voluntary contributions, yet very few such contributions had been received so far. The task of implementation was the shared responsibility of the Secretariat and the Parties. The human resources in the Secretariat were woefully insufficient, with just two people trying to cover all countries in the Agreement Area, all partners and all AEWA issues. Progress with internal and external communication activities was summarised, again highlighting the limitations imposed by lack of funding. WOW was identified as the single biggest project contributing towards implementation of the Communication Strategy. A pre-MOP4 training course on negotiation skills had been held to enhance capacity within the AEWA family and efforts would be made to provide further training opportunities along these lines. Other activities included the AEWA website and email Newsletter, and World Migratory Bird Day.

147. Mali stressed the need for greater synergy between the various international bodies promoting such strategies and called for African states to tell these bodies clearly what the needs of African countries were.

148. The African Union and Mauritania raised serious concerns that the use of English was being privileged over French in AEWA, including during the MOP, where many key documents were only available in English. Furthermore, the negotiation-skills training course had been open to anglophone participants only.

149. The Executive Secretary acknowledged and regretted this problem but the Secretariat did not have the financial means to produce all documents (some of which were very lengthy) in both English and French. There had only been enough money available to make summaries in French for these longer papers. He clarified that the Standing Committee was always conducted in both languages. For the Technical Committee it had been agreed that English only would be used for meetings (as in the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel), though documents were available in both English and French. The current Chair was bilingual, which also eased communication between francophone and anglophone Committee members. For the future, it would have to be discussed whether full translation and interpretation were required. The

training session on negotiation skills was the first of its kind to be organised and the Secretariat promised to hold a similar workshop in French, dependent on funding being made available.

150. UNEP, which had played a key role in the negotiation skills workshop, noted that it had the human resources and know-how to undertake further capacity building, but delivery was dependent on additional financial resources being secured.

Agenda item 18. Report on the establishment and celebration of World Migratory Bird Day

151. The Secretariat summarised the origin of World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) and its establishment in 2006. A website has been set up to increase awareness and information about the initiative. In 2007, a children's painting competition was held on the theme of 'Migratory Birds in a Changing Climate'. The theme in 2008 was 'Migratory Birds – Ambassadors of Biodiversity', and there had been coverage in several high-profile media outlets.

152. Senegal noted the scarcity of resources at national level to respond to the various initiatives and 'days' organised by different international processes. With regard to the AEWA Communication Strategy, if we wished to get through to those with no internet or television access, we needed to find other means of reaching rural populations in Africa.

153. Mali called for a particular effort to reach out to children living around wetlands and waterbirds in rural Africa to ensure that they had some of the same educational benefits as children in other regions.

154. Equatorial Guinea concurred with Senegal and suggested simplifying certain activities to cut down on expenditure. At the same time efforts to cooperate with other bodies should be enhanced.

155. The Executive Secretary confirmed that efforts were being made to ensure WMBD was well coordinated with similar initiatives. Discussions were underway with BirdLife International to explore the opportunities of working more closely with World Birdwatch Day in future. In practice, WMBD activities in most countries were largely organised by BirdLife partners, so AEWA itself incurred almost no costs and there was certainly no Core Budget provision. Nevertheless, the impact of the initiative worldwide had been enormous. For the moment, WMBD would continue to operate on a small scale, but more ambitious educational outreach might be considered in the future. The Executive Secretary had visited the US Fish & Wildlife Service for consultations regarding the coordination of dates for WMBD (now fixed for the second week of May each year) and International Migratory Bird Day celebrated in a large part of the Americas.

Agenda item 19. Draft Strategic Plan and enhanced National Report Format for online reporting

156. The Secretariat introduced the following documents:

- AEWA/MOP 4.19 *Draft AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017*
- AEWA/MOP 4.20 *Draft National Report Format for online reporting*
- AEWA Res 4.7 *Adoption of Strategic Plan 2009-2017 and online National Report Format*

157. Resolution 3.9 had instructed the Standing Committee to prepare a Strategic Plan in cooperation with the Technical Committee and the Secretariat. The process commenced in November 2006 and involved a series of consultations including an *ad hoc* workshop of the Technical Committee in January 2008. At the same time, a revised format for National Reports was produced, structured in accordance with the emerging draft Strategic Plan. The Plan would cover three intersessional periods and a new Strategic Plan would be prepared for MOP7. The Plan had been produced in full conformity with the CMS strategic planning processes.

158. The draft Strategic Plan contained a Vision, a Goal, and five Objectives (linked to the headings of the AEWA Action Plan):

- Favourable conservation status
- Sustainable use
- Increased knowledge
- Improved communication
- Improved cooperation and capacity

159. These Objectives had been translated into a total of 27 Targets (between 3 and 9 per Objective) with quantifiable indicators verifiable through information contained in National Reports, international reviews, various other reports, AEWA Table 1, and the IUCN Red List. Ten cross-cutting issues had been identified as operational principles.

160. Implementation would require financial and human resources. The Strategic Plan could be reviewed at each MOP, as a rolling document. The new online National Report Format would provide an opportunity for easier reporting and robust monitoring of the Strategic Plan.

161. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States, welcomed the work carried out on the Strategic Plan and the convergence with work under CMS. The EU had many points of detail to raise with regard to the draft Strategic Plan and these would be tabled during the relevant Working Group sessions. The EU wished to make a general observation that some areas of the draft Resolution would benefit from more precise wording to avoid confusion. There was also a need to leave the door open to the outcome of ongoing discussions in the CMS framework.

162. Switzerland considered the Strategic Plan to be very good overall, but had some general remarks and many specific comments. The general remarks were that:

- The Objectives were all quite good and fairly precise, except Objective 5, which was rather vague.
- The Targets could usefully be reformulated to read e.g. “Legal protection provided to all Column A species”.
- Concerning the long lifespan envisaged for the Strategic Plan, it would have been useful to consider setting milestones on the way to MOP7.

163. Mali expressed concern over the formulation of Objective 2 in relation to Targets 2.1 and 2.3 and their relevance and feasibility for African countries.

164. Armenia suggested it would be useful to identify possible risks and how to avoid them.

165. The Secretariat underlined that the text of the Strategic Plan was based on the Agreement text, which was why the wording of concern to Mali had been used. The suggestion to add milestones was a good idea, but it would take some time to draft and integrate these, as would the identification of risks and means of risk avoidance. Regarding the remarks of France on behalf of the EU, AEWA would strive for the best possible synergy with CMS.

166. The Secretariat introduced the Revised Online Format for National Reporting (document AEWA/MOP 4.20) in further detail.

167. The Online Format had been requested by Resolution 3.5. A draft of the Format had been produced for Technical Committee (TC) consultation in late 2006. The Format was revised entirely in the *ad hoc* TC workshop held in Jan 2007 and, at that workshop, the Format and Strategic Plan were aligned. A new draft was submitted to the TC and Standing Committee and a final version was made available in April 2007. This was forwarded to UNEP-WCMC for preparation of online reporting facilities (in the framework of a project funded by Norway and covering a number of different MEAs). The interface development took about a year. In March 2008 the Secretariat received training on use of the interface. Revisions were made in the following months to produce the current version contained in AEWA/MOP 4.20, though some further technical optimisation was required. Currently there was no analytical tool linked to the Format, and the development of such a tool would have to be the subject of a further project. The support of UNEP had been crucial as had Norway’s funding of the UNEP-WCMC project.

168. The Executive Secretary stressed that the online National Report Format was the first step towards making reporting easier for Parties. However, solutions would have to be found for African countries that didn't have easy internet access.

169. The Netherlands enquired if it would be possible to pre-populate the Online Format with information available from international databases, e.g. population sizes.

170. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States, was grateful for the considerable progress made and was glad to hear that a solution would be found for countries that didn't have internet access. There was certainly a need for synthesis as well as analysis of data, but this needed to be done with care, and conclusions based on such analysis and synthesis would require thorough verification.

171. The European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, echoed the need for a system of verification in relation to synthesis. The online format was a data-entry tool, so we needed to prioritise the development of analytical capacity quickly during the next intersessional period.

172. UNEP thanked the Government of Norway for supporting development of this tool, but noted that further work would depend on a clear signal from AEWAs Parties on its usefulness. UNEP would need this mandate to secure the additional funding required. The development of the online tool had been considered as a means of reducing the burden of national reporting, but only testing by Parties would demonstrate whether real benefits were forthcoming.

173. In response to the observations of the EU Presidency and the European Commission, as well as to interventions from Armenia, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, the Netherlands, Niger and the UK, the Secretariat:

- Concurred that the development of an analytical tool was indeed a high priority but would have to be carried out as part of a common effort with other MEAs, rather than by AEWAs alone.
- Confirmed that the Secretariat would aim to pre-populate the Online Format where data were readily available, including population figures.
- Confirmed that there would be a comprehensive guide to using the Online Format.
- Confirmed that the system would be able to accommodate password-protected inputs from multiple stakeholders in the preparation of draft reports and that the reports would only be posted for public viewing when so agreed between the Party and the Secretariat.
- Reminded delegates that the working languages of the Agreement were English and French, but not Spanish. Adding another UN language would significantly increase AEWAs budgetary needs.
- Acknowledged that inclusion of hunting-bag data was just one of many additional items that could potentially be included in the Online Format, but that care was needed not to over-burden Parties.

174. France made a formal statement on behalf of the French Government concerning the question of languages. The responses to the valid concerns raised by many francophone delegations had not been satisfactory and France believed that the meeting was not working within the rules of the Agreement. France also wished to point out that comparisons with a global treaty, such as the Ramsar Convention, were not valid. In discussions relating to the budget for the forthcoming intersessional period, France would be especially vigilant in ensuring that the official languages of the Agreement would receive equitable treatment in future.

175. The African Union strongly subscribed to these comments.

Agenda item 20. Report of the Credentials Committee

176. Kenya, Chair of the Credentials Committee, presented the Committee's first report. He recalled that in accordance with Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure, the MOP had appointed the following countries to serve on the Credentials Committee:

- France
- Kenya

- Nigeria
- Syria

177. The Committee had assessed credentials against agreed criteria that had been communicated to all Parties in advance of the MOP. The Committee had concluded that:

- Of the 48 Parties participating in the MOP, 42 had so far submitted credentials;
- 37 of these credentials were in order; and
- 5 credentials, in the opinion of the Committee, did not meet the criteria (one was not an original document, two were not translated into an official language of AEWA, and two were not signed by the appropriate authorities).

178. The Committee was seeking guidance on the acceptability of credentials in Arabic, noting that these were accepted by some other MEAs. Other outstanding issues would be discussed with the delegations concerned.

Agenda item 21. Financial and Administrative Matters

179. The Executive Secretary introduced the following documents:

- AEWA/MOP 4.21 *Financial and administrative matters /Report on income and expenditures 2006-2008*
- AEWA/MOP 4.22 *Draft Budget proposal 2009-2012*
- AEWA Res. 4.8 *Financial and administrative matters*

180. Regarding expenditure, there were some unspent funds in 2006 and 2007 due to exchange-rate gains. No shortfall was expected in 2008 and all allocated funds would be absorbed by the end of the year.

181. On the income side, some major payers had paid their dues in advance, providing some additional income from interest accrued. As of 1 September 2008 only €120,048 in dues were still outstanding for the 2006-2008 triennium. Eleven Parties had payments in arrears of 3 years or more amounting to a total of €17,347.

182. The amount received in voluntary contributions had increased over the lifetime of the Agreement, especially since 2005. A total of US\$1.4 million (€10,000) had been accrued during the last triennium, but the total required for full implementation of IIPs would have been €5.2 million. Since MOP3, funding for travel and subsistence for eligible delegates had needed to be raised through voluntary contributions. The Secretariat was trying to find new donors, especially within the development cooperation sector.

183. In conclusion, the financial status of the Core Budget was healthy. The move from US\$ to € has been beneficial. The current global economic context meant that voluntary contributions might decrease in future. The voluntary contributions received to date were insufficient to implement the IIPs. The decision to take meeting costs out of the Core Budget had resulted in negative effects on the functioning of the Agreement.

184. With regard to the draft budget proposal for 2009-2012, there was a proposed shift from triennial to quadrennial MOPs. The Ramsar Convention was heading in the same direction and it would be efficient for the two treaties to use the same periodicity. The Strategic Plan should be a basis for the draft budget, alongside the current status of financial and human resources. The Secretariat wanted to see a Core Budget sufficient to cover:

- Travel and subsistence costs for eligible Standing Committee and Technical Committee members;
- Support of €80,000 in cash to WOW;
- IT service costs of €35,000 incurred through joining the UNV system;
- Costs of extending part-time support posts to become full-time;
- Costs of additional staff foreseen in the Strategic Plan;

- Translation into French of all MOP5 documentation.

185. Areas for possible savings were very limited. Extending the intersessional period to 4 years was one means, as was reducing the frequency of Standing Committee meetings, or deciding to use English only in Technical Committee meetings.

186. The budget scenarios presented in document AWEA/MOP 4.22, ranged from a 0% increase to a 35% increase over the budget for the 2006-2008 triennium. A 15% increase would represent consolidation of the current position, but no increase in real terms. An increase of less than 15% would represent a cut in real terms. Realistically, the Working Group dealing with this issue would therefore need to look at an increase in the range of 15% to 30%. In terms of the amount paid per Party, even a 25% increase would represent a relatively modest sum. Under all of the scenarios presented, actual implementation of the Agreement would continue to depend on additional voluntary contributions.

187. The retiring member and Expert in Game Management of the Technical Committee, Preben Clausen, feared that increasing the length of time between MOPs and meetings of the Standing Committee and Technical Committee would result in a slowing of progress towards AEWA's further development and implementation.

188. This concern was shared by OMPO.

189. Niger believed that a sufficient amount should be made available to support national implementation and reporting efforts, e.g. through the provision of computer equipment. Possible savings should not compromise activities in pursuit of AEWA's goals. Reducing the frequency of meetings would decrease costs, but what would happen to efficiency? Above all, the idea of holding Technical Committee meetings in English only would not be acceptable to francophone Parties.

190. Niger's concern about the efficiency of reducing the frequency of meetings was shared by the African Union, which also wondered if this would require an amendment to the Agreement in the case of a shift to quadrennial MOPs.

191. Tanzania noted that all of the budget scenarios appeared to assume that all Parties would pay their dues. This was perhaps unrealistic on the basis of past performance. In addition, if the budget were increased, those who currently paid most overall should perhaps pay a slightly lower rate of increase, and those who currently paid least should pay a slightly higher rate of increase.

192. The Executive Secretary agreed it was true that less frequent meetings might result in a reduction of influence on implementing the Agreement. The frequency of meetings would be entirely dependent on the resources provided by Parties; the same limitation applied to the extent of translation and interpretation at meetings. A permanent move from 3 to 4 years between MOPs would indeed require an amendment to the Agreement, but legal advice from the TC expert of environmental law suggested that AEWA could decide once, on an *ad hoc* basis, to temporarily increase the intersessional period to four years. This could even have some benefits in enabling the Secretariat to focus more on the real work of implementing the Agreement. With reference to Niger's intervention, it was unlikely that AEWA would be in a position to purchase computer equipment for national focal points.

193. Responding to a point made by the Executive Secretary, the Vice-Chair from Switzerland noted that the Ramsar Convention had yet to take any decision on the periodicity of its COPs. This issue had been discussed energetically by the Ramsar Standing Committee and remained controversial.

Establishment of Working Groups

194. The Executive Secretary confirmed that two Working Groups would be established: the first on Financial and Administrative Matters, and the second on Scientific and Technical Matters. These would meet initially in a joint session during the evening of 16 September to discuss items of common interest, including

(a) the Strategic Plan and Online National Reporting Format; (b) hunting and trade, and phasing-out of lead shot. The Working Groups would be asked to report back to Plenary.

Agenda item 22. Report of the development of new projects

a) Strengthening of waterbird and wetland conservation capacity in Northern Africa

195. The Secretariat presented the document AEW/MOP Inf. 4.1 *Strengthening of waterbird and wetland conservation capacity in Northern Africa*.

196. In 2006 the Secretariat had made contact with development agencies. A positive response was received from the Spanish Development Agency (AECID).

197. A draft project proposal had been prepared in cooperation with BirdLife International, Wetlands International and the WOW Project. In 2008 AECID had allocated a grant of €400,000 for year 1 of the project, which was known for short as *WetCap* and focused on Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. There were three key aims:

- to strengthen capacity for waterbird conservation of all important stakeholders;
- to build knowledge of waterbirds and wetland site networks; and
- to promote waterbird and wetland conservation and management through small-grant projects.

198. There would be a Regional Coordinator and a Steering Committee composed of all key stakeholders. The duration was three years, of which year 1 had been covered by AECID. Depending on success in the first year, the project might receive funding for the other two years from the same donor.

b) Strengthening of waterbird and wetland conservation capacity in Africa

199. The Executive Secretary recalled that this item had been renamed since the original agenda had been circulated. A draft resolution was in preparation; this would be AEW Res. 4.9 Rev. 1 *African Initiative for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in Africa*. The idea was to cover the whole of Africa, so that the door remained open to all appropriate initiatives. It was hoped that the revised draft would be tabled later during the day.

Agenda item 23. Draft International Implementation Priorities 2009-2012

200. The Secretariat introduced document AEW/MOP 4.23 *Draft AEW International Implementation Priorities 2009-2012* and the associated draft Resolution AEW Res. 4.10 *AEW International Implementation Priorities for 2009-2012*

201. AEW/MOP 4.23 built on the content of the IIPs for the triennium 2006-2008, given that many of these IIPs had not yet been implemented owing to the budgetary shortfall discussed earlier in the meeting. Only 5 new projects had been added as a consequence of the international reviews tabled under Agenda item 11. The aim was to keep the list as concise as possible and to give priority to enabling completion of IIPs covered under the WOW project.

202. Wetlands International questioned the strategic guidance provided by the document in relation to WetCap and WOW.

203. The Executive Secretary responded that WetCap was a clear example of a project developed to cover IIPs for the 2006-2008 triennium. However, the Secretariat had to take into account the will of potential donors, who ultimately decided where funding would go. The original project proposal had therefore been modified and frustration that it no longer contributed directly to WOW was understandable.

204. Switzerland recalled that many of the IIPs for 2006-2008 had not been implemented due to a shortfall in funding. Switzerland therefore suggested tasking the Technical Committee with exploring priorities within the draft 2009-2012 IIPs according to feasibility, urgency and financial status. Switzerland also had specific comments and questions concerning draft IIP numbers 12, 13 and 26.

205. The Executive Secretary responded to Switzerland's specific comments and confirmed that the Secretariat would ensure that the final list of IIPs for 2009-2012 was distributed as widely as possible to potential donors.

206. The Chair invited delegates to raise further points on this Agenda item with the Working Groups.

Agenda item 24. Proposal for Amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement

a) All proposals to amend the AEWA annexes received from Contracting Parties

207. The Secretariat presented the documents AEWA/MOP 4.24 *Proposals for amendments to the annexes to the Agreement* and the associated draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.11 *Amendments to the annexes to the Agreement*.

208. AEWA/MOP 4.24 summarised all proposed amendments submitted in accordance with the Agreement text. These included proposals made by:

- Mauritius (addition of 20 new species to Annex 2 - List of species to which the Agreement applies; and Table 1 of Annex 3 - Status of the populations of migratory waterbirds).
- Italy (amendments to Table 1 of Annex 3 - Status of the populations of migratory waterbirds).
- Croatia (amendments to paragraph 2.1.1(d) of the AEWA Action Plan dealing with trade in Column B populations; amendments to paragraph 7.5 of the AEWA Action Plan on frequency of update of international reviews).
- Libya (amendments to paragraph 4.1.4 of the AEWA Action Plan dealing with phase out of use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands).

209. The Secretariat explained the background to the proposal from Mauritius. Prior to MOP3, the Technical Committee (TC) recommended that proposals to add birds of prey, owls, kingfishers and passerines to the species covered by the Agreement should not go forward. The TC had also recommended that 21 seabird species should be included in Annex 2. This proposal had been discussed at MOP3 but no decision could be reached, owing to late circulation of the document. During the current triennium, the TC had analysed 28 international instruments and concluded that there was a clear niche for AEWA to play a major role in the conservation of seabirds, working closely with other relevant bodies. The addition of these species to Annex 2 would not be a completely new departure for the Agreement as there were already 30 or more species in Annex 2 that were considered to be seabirds and which occurred predominantly in the marine environment. Further work by the TC had reduced the list of proposed additions from 21 to 20 species. Mauritius had submitted its proposed amendments in line with the TC's conclusions and recommendations.

210. The amendments proposed by Italy had also resulted from the work of the TC and involved slight modifications to the definition of Category A1(b), the addition of missing definitions of geographical terms used in range descriptions, and amendments to the conservation status of populations in Table 1.

211. The amendments proposed by Croatia aimed at the alignment of the wording in paragraph 2.1.1 (d) with 2.1.1 (c), and adjustment to the frequency of updates of international reviews to make the process efficient, more balanced and more cost-effective.

212. The amendments proposed by Libya related to the date for phasing-out lead shot in para 4.1.4 of the AEWA Action Plan, which was currently fixed at 2000. The TC had therefore suggested that the wording from Resolution 2.2 operational paragraph 2 should be used, i.e. that the deadline should be self-imposed and published by each Party. Libya was also proposing amendments to paragraph 4.3 of the AEWA Action Plan,

as drafted by the TC. These dealt with the conservation of waterbirds in the marine environment and also in connection with marine or freshwater aquaculture.

213. The UK noted that document AEWA/MOP 4.24 still contained the UK's initial comments on a draft version. These had no place in the final paper, so should be removed.

214. Mauritius urged the MOP to adopt its proposed amendments and was supported by Guinea, Madagascar and Nigeria, the latter Party speaking on behalf of the African states.

215. Acknowledging the work of the Secretariat and the Technical Committee, the European Commission stated that the proposal to add seabirds was a difficult issue, as had been expressed at MOP3, since it represented a very significant addition to the list of species and extended the list of activities that AEWA would be trying to tackle. Delegates had to be very clear in acknowledging that much of what would have to be achieved could only be done in the framework of other international bodies, notably those concerned with fisheries. The European Commission would address these concerns in more detail during the Working Group discussions.

216. Norway agreed it was a delicate issue and noted its concern that the proposal would add species and groups closely linked to fish stocks. The added value of having these on the AEWA list was unclear and the Agreement was already short of funds for existing tasks.

217. Switzerland, speaking as Chair of the TC working group that elaborated the seabird proposal, responded to Norway and recalled the Secretariat's introduction. The TC working group had studied all available instruments very thoroughly and found that none covered these species adequately. If these species were listed in Annex 2, AEWA would signal their importance to Range States, but the addition would have no direct impacts on the AEWA budget. The TC working group considered the proposed listing to be of real and significant value.

218. The African Union raised the issue of pest species and protection of food supplies and called for this issue to be taken into account by AEWA.

219. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item further within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

b) Guidance for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan

220. The Secretariat introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.25 *Draft guidance for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan* and the associated draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.12 *Adoption of guidance for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan*. These had been produced in response to Resolution 3.3. The TC had developed guidance for two of the three criteria, but finalisation of work on Criterion 3 had been postponed to the next triennium owing to budgetary constraints.

221. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

c) Procedure for submission of proposals for amendments to the annexes to the Agreement

222. The Executive Secretary introduced draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.13 *Procedure for submission of proposals to amend the annexes to the Agreement*. He noted that it had sometimes proved difficult to find a Party able to submit proposed amendments to the annexes, since most of the work was conducted within the TC and progress was not always necessarily followed in detail by Parties during the intersessional period. The TC expert of environmental law had indicated that this problem could be solved by mandating the Standing Committee to propose amendments recommended by the TC.

223. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

Agenda item 25. New Conservation Guidelines

224. The Secretariat introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.26 *Draft Guidelines on how to avoid, minimize or mitigate the impact of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds* and the associated draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.14 *Adoption of Conservation Guidelines*. This was quite a lengthy and complex document that filled a gap in the guidance provided by AEWA. Its production had been identified as IIP no. 15 in the 2006-2008 triennial IIPs, and had been supported financially by Belgium. The proposed guidance had been reviewed by the TC and endorsed by the Standing Committee.

225. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

Agenda item 26. Climate Change and migratory waterbirds

a) Report on effects of climate change on migratory birds within the African-Eurasian flyways

226. The Secretariat introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.27 *Report on effects of climate change on migratory birds within the African-Eurasian flyways* and the associated draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.15 *The effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds*. These had been produced in response to Resolution 3.17. and preparation of the report had been supported financially by the UK. The report had been approved by the TC and endorsed by the Standing Committee. It contained reviews of:

- Climate change within the AEWA Agreement Area (e.g. temperature and rainfall change, including drought);
- Effects of climate change on waterbirds (e.g. effects on range and distribution, demography; sea-level rise impacts such as 'coastal squeeze'; indirect impacts such as land-use changes);
- Future effects of climate change on waterbirds;
- Possible means of adapting to climate change (e.g. establishment of protected areas at the edges of the Sahara);
- Species especially vulnerable to climate change (23 species identified as critically to moderately affected by climate change; among these 7 of the species identified as highly threatened are seabirds); and
- International research needs (e.g. geographical focus on sub-Saharan Africa and West and Central Asia).

227. A summary version of the report had been produced; copies were available for delegates and additional copies could be made available if required. Further information could be obtained at the MOP4 side-event on this topic.

228. France congratulated those involved with producing the study. This type of report represented a valuable addition to the work carried out by Parties at national level. The short readable version should be made available for the public and given high profile in communication surrounding the outcomes of MOP4. It would be helpful to extract some highlights from the main report to assist such a communication effort.

229. Mali also welcomed the report and underlined the importance attached to the issue of climate change by African countries, especially in the Sahel region. Among the potential impacts of climate change was the exacerbation of conflicts between wild birds and crops.

230. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item further within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

b) Guidelines on the measures needed to help waterbirds adapt to climate change

231. The Secretariat introduced the document AEWA/MOP 4.28 *Draft Conservation Guidelines on measures needed to help waterbirds to adapt to climate change* and the associated draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.14 *Adoption of Conservation Guidelines*. These had also been produced in response to Resolution

3.17, with financial support from the UK, and were closely linked to the conclusions of the review presented under Agenda item 26 a).

232. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

Agenda item 27. Latest information on Avian Influenza

233. The representative of FAO, on behalf of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, reviewed membership of the Task Force, which had been established in August 2005 by CMS, in close cooperation with AEWA. Most of the Task Force's work was conducted electronically and focused on collating and disseminating the best-available scientific information. The website www.aiweb.info (hosted by UNEP and maintained on behalf of the Task Force by WWT, UK) provided one of the best-available information sources on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1. A brochure had also been produced and translated into many languages. FAO was originally a Task Force observer, but became a full member in 2007 and now co-convened the Task Force with CMS, recognizing that the heart of the problem was the interface between domestic and wild birds. FAO was playing an important role through collaboration and facilitation (e.g. holding workshops and producing manuals), as well as implementation of field surveillance and satellite tracking.

234. The UK, also speaking on behalf of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, introduced draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.16 *Responding to the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1* which had been drafted by the Technical Committee. This built on the activities called for under Resolution 3.18. The operative paragraphs called for:

- strengthening of integrated responses
- involvement of specialist ornithologists in providing advice to governments
- communication programmes to promote a balanced approach
- collection and synthesis of information for decision makers
- measures to strengthen national capacity
- use and dissemination of appended guidance, including translation into local languages; and
- continued collation of guidance.

235. The three Appendices to the draft Resolution were summarised. Finally the guidance attached to a draft Resolution, some of which was also being presented for consideration by Ramsar COP10 (South Korea, October-November 2008), was commended to AEWA delegates as a useful resource.

236. The African Union called for FAO to establish vigilance committees in each country in cooperation with other relevant bodies. Coordination between all relevant ministries was also vital, so that effective joint measures could be taken.

237. Mali noted that a large number of international bodies had played an important role in helping African countries to halt the progress of the disease. African countries were grateful for this support, but much remained to be done and increased assistance was needed.

238. Burkina Faso called on FAO and other funding partners to support HPAI surveillance activities in recognition that prevention is better than cure.

239. Mauritania concurred with this view, noting that there was no comprehensive HPAI surveillance programme for the Banc d'Arguin, even though it was a major area of concentration for migratory waterbirds. To date, issues arising from the spread of HPAI H5N1 had been addressed primarily by public health ministries; agriculture and environment came along at a later stage and there was indeed a need for effective coordination.

240. The European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, noted that in the months following MOP3 more than half of the EU Members States had experienced outbreaks of HPAI H5N1. This had highlighted the vital importance of multidisciplinary collaboration.

241. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item further within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

Agenda item 28. Draft International Single Species Action Plans

242. This agenda item was introduced by the Secretariat. The following seven Agenda sub-items, the relevant SSAP documents, as well as the associated draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.17 *Adoption and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans*, were summarised together:

a) Lesser Flamingo – *Phoeniconaias minor*

Doc. AEWA/MOP 4.29 *Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser Flamingo*

b) Eurasian Spoonbill – *Platalea leucorodia*

Doc. AEWA/MOP 4.30 *Single Species Action Plan for the Eurasian Spoonbill*

c) Black-tailed Godwit – *Limosa limosa*

Doc. AEWA/MOP 4.31 *Single Species Action Plan for the Black-tailed Godwit*

d) Lesser White-fronted Goose – *Anser erythropus*

Doc. AEWA/MOP 4.32 *Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose*

e) Maccoa Duck – *Oxyura maccoa*

Doc. AEWA/MOP 4.33 *Single Species Action Plan for the Maccoa Duck*

f) White-winged Flufftail – *Sarothrura ayresi*

Doc. AEWA/MOP 4.34 *Single Species Action Plan for the White-winged Flufftail*

g) Madagascar Pond Heron – *Ardeola idae*

Doc. AEWA/MOP 4.35 *Single Species Action Plan for the Madagascar Pond Heron*

243. The SSAPs for Lesser Flamingo, White-winged Flufftail and Madagascar Pond Heron had been prepared jointly with CMS.

244. Financial support for SSAPs had been received from the governments of Sweden, Germany, Norway, Finland, and Italy via the Secretariat of CMS, and from the Dutch BirdLife Partner Vogelbescherming.

245. The SSAPs had been developed by a range of partners. All went through rigorous consultations with Range States and technical/scientific experts; these consultations were ongoing for one SSAP. The Secretariat hoped that all 7 SSAPs would be approved by MOP4, but implementation would be the critical issue and wholly dependent on the availability of adequate funding.

h) Revised format for AEWA Single Species Action Plans

246. The Secretariat introduced document AEWA/MOP 4.36 *Revised format for Single Species Action Plans* and the associated draft Resolution AEWA Res. 4.17 *Adoption and implementation of International*

Single Species Action Plans. This work had been coordinated by BirdLife International and aimed to streamline the SSAPs and thus facilitate their implementation.

247. The Chair invited delegates to discuss this item further within the appropriate Working Group during the afternoon of 17 September.

Continuation of the Working Groups

248. The Executive Secretary confirmed that two Working Groups would operate during the afternoon of 17 September:

- Working Group on Financial & Administrative Matters, chaired by the Vice-Chair from Senegal.
- Working Group on Technical & Scientific Matters, chaired by the Vice-Chair from Switzerland.

249. These Working Groups were charged in particular with reviewing the draft Resolutions that had been tabled and which were due for adoption on the final day of the MOP. Both Working Groups would be assisted by representatives of the Secretariat. A list of which draft Resolutions would be considered by which Working Group was read out to assist delegations in planning their attendance at Working Groups.

Agenda item 29. Report of the Credentials Committee

250. The second and final report of the Credentials Committee was presented, on the Committee's behalf, by Nigeria. Of 48 Parties participating in MOP4, 43 had submitted credentials, of which 38 had been verified by the Credentials Committee as meeting the required criteria. In the Committee's opinion, five credentials did not meet the established criteria, being either: (a) not original documents; or (b) not translated into one of the official languages of the Agreement; or (c) not signed by an appropriate authority. The Committee was seeking guidance from the meeting with regard to the possible approval of credentials submitted in Arabic, given that Syria was a member of the Credentials Committee and therefore able to advise other members with respect to documentation in Arabic.

251. The Executive Secretary referred to Rule 18, paragraph 5, of the Rules of Procedure and strongly recommended that the Rules of Procedure were observed strictly, given the practical and financial difficulties that would arise if credentials were submitted in languages that neither the Secretariat nor the members of the Credentials Committee were fully equipped to deal with.

252. Algeria, supported by Equatorial Guinea noted that the Credentials Committee for MOP4 had competence in several languages, including Arabic, and that it therefore shouldn't be a problem to deal with credentials submitted in Arabic.

253. The Executive Secretary warned against making an exception to the Rules of Procedure. Even if one member of the Credentials Committee was able to read credentials submitted in a non-official language, the other members would require a translation to review and verify the document. This would set a precedent that could result in a significant and costly additional workload.

254. The Chair concluded that any move to permit the Credentials Committee to review credentials submitted in a language other than English or French would require an amendment to the Rules of Procedure.

Agenda item 30. Institutional arrangements

a) Standing Committee

255. The Executive Secretary introduced document AEWA Res. 4.18 *Institutional Arrangements: Standing Committee*. He recalled that the current Standing Committee had been appointed at MOP2 and would be

stepping down at the end of the present meeting. Nominations were therefore required for Members and Alternates for the following sub-regions:

- Europe and Central Asia
- Middle East and North Africa
- West and Central Africa
- Eastern and Southern Africa

256. He noted that with the additional mandate to conduct the Implementation Review Process, the Standing Committee would have an increased level of responsibility and work during the next intersessional period, making it even more important that candidates for election should be able to devote sufficient time to AEWA matters.

257. The Chair of the Standing Committee (Tanzania) reported that he had received nominations from the African sub-regions, but not yet for Europe and Central Asia.

258. The Chair requested the sub-regions to consult further so that final nominations were available for the final adoption of Resolution 4.18 later in the day.

b) Technical Committee

259. The Secretariat introduced document AEWA Res. 4.19 *Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee* dealing with the composition and *Modus operandi* of the Technical Committee.

260. The UK suggested that Rule 6.2 should be amended to read “the Chairperson”, rather than “he”, and so remove gender-specific language.

261. Wetlands International (WI) requested that the name of WI’s proposed Alternate representative be changed to Mr Szabolcs Nagy.

262. France thanked those who were retiring from the Standing Committee or the Technical Committee for their significant contributions. In future it would be better not to wait until the very last moment of an intersessional period to identify candidates for committee membership.

263. In response to concerns raised by Congo and Mali, the Secretariat recalled that the members of the Technical Committee were proposed and elected in their individual expert capacity, not as representatives of the state from which they originated. The list contained in draft Resolution 4.19 was therefore the list of individual members (and their Alternates) so far proposed for the next intersessional period. The countries given alongside each name were for information only.

264. The Chair asked that, to the extent possible, nominations to fill remaining gaps in the list should be brought forward prior to final adoption of Resolution 4.19 under Agenda item 33.

c) Cooperation with Other Bodies and Processes

i. The conclusion of a Memorandum of Cooperation with OMPO - Oiseaux Migrateurs de Paléarctique Occidental

265. The Executive Secretary introduced AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.4 *Memorandum of Cooperation with OMPO* and recalled that earlier during the meeting OMPO had received the AEWA Award in recognition of its invaluable support for the Agreement. OMPO was the first official AEWA Ambassador and had played a key role in promoting the Agreement among potential Contracting Parties, and was currently working in particular with Morocco and the Russian Federation. OMPO had also assisted with research, survey and monitoring programmes. In recognition of these close ties between AEWA and OMPO, a formal Memorandum of Cooperation had therefore been concluded on 12 November 2007, as contained in document Inf. 4.4. It was hoped to conclude similar Memoranda of Cooperation with other organisations in future.

ii. Progress made regarding the conclusion of a Memorandum of Cooperation with CAFF – Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

266. The Executive Secretary briefly summarised the benefits and synergies of close cooperation between AEWA and CAFF and reported that discussions towards the conclusion of a Memorandum of Cooperation were currently underway. He hoped to be able to report a successful outcome of this process at MOP5.

267. In reply to a question raised by Wetlands International, the Executive Secretary confirmed that issues under consideration included whether CAFF would become an official AEWA observer and whether the Memorandum of Cooperation should be concluded with CAFF directly or with the Arctic Council.

Agenda item 31. Development of interest for the Agreement

a) Agreement/MoU on Raptors and Owls in the African-Eurasian Region

268. The Executive Secretary introduced AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.5 *Draft MoU on Raptors and Owls in the African-Eurasian Region* and summarised progress under the ongoing CMS process to draw up an option for international cooperation on these groups of birds. An international meeting had been held at Loch Lomond, Scotland in 2007 and it appeared that the Range States were not opting for an Agreement, but an MoU, with a forthcoming adoption meeting to be held in Abu Dhabi in October 2008. AEWA was looking forward to exploring opportunities for cooperation and synergy with the new framework for migratory raptors.

269. The UAE, speaking as one of the lead partners in the development of cooperation concerning migratory raptors and owls under the CMS, recalled some of the steps leading up to the 2007 meeting in the UK and also looked forward to close cooperation with AEWA and others to ensure maximum efficiency of implementation.

270. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, had taken due note of the information presented. No resolution was provided for under this Agenda item, but the EU considered it an important point and wished to stress the importance of synergies. In particular, the EU considered it essential to view and discuss this new initiative against the overall structure of the CMS family.

271. Raising a point of clarification, the UK stated that no decisions had yet been taken on funding for the new MoU on migratory raptors and owls, but there would be no obligatory financial contributions. It was important that as many AEWA Range States as possible should attend the next meeting, in Abu Dhabi, where finalisation and adoption of the MoU was due to take place.

272. Germany felt that the new MoU raised some long-term considerations from AEWA's point of view, including the coherence of the geographical coverage of the two mechanisms. Why not consider extending AEWA's Agreement Area so that the coverage of the waterbird and raptor mechanisms under CMS were similar?

273. Acknowledging support from UAE and CMS that would enable Mali's attendance at the meeting in Abu Dhabi, Mali echoed the call of the EU Member States with regard to cooperation and synergy within the CMS family. It was important to understand the difficulties faced by many states in trying to work with multiple frameworks sharing similar aims and objectives.

274. The Executive Secretary noted that the AEWA Standing Committee had signalled AEWA's great interest in remaining closely involved with the development of the migratory raptor and owl MoU. A representative of the Secretariat would be attending the Abu Dhabi meeting.

b) Launch of the Action Plan for the Central Asia Flyway

275. The Executive Secretary introduced the document AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.6 *Action Plan for the Central Asia Flyway* (CAF) noting that this issue had been under consideration for some time. There was still no clear signal as to what kind of legal instrument would be used to implement the Action Plan, though the

latter was now finalised and available online. The Action Plan covered 30 countries, of which 16 were AEWA Range States, and half of the populations were AEWA populations. This meant that there was real concern about having two different instruments that overlapped so much. Since AEWA MOP3, CMS had been taking the lead on this issue and AEWA had been following from a certain distance.

276. Armenia welcomed all efforts for effective cooperation in relation to the Central Asian Flyway. However, as a country at the intersection of AEWA and CAF flyways, Armenia questioned the need for a separate agreement.

277. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, wished to voice very similar comments to those it had made concerning the migratory raptor and owl MoU, i.e. that careful thought needed to be given to the overall structure of the CMS family as a whole. It was important to look for as much synergy as possible. The EU wanted the AEWA Standing Committee to be kept fully informed of progress on the CAF process.

278. Wetlands International noted that an interim coordination mechanism for CAF had been contracted to Wetlands International. A number of tasks had been defined and were currently being worked on:

- communication via a website, newsletters, brochures and posters; and
- four proposals for priority flyway-level activities, e.g. development of a 'Conservation Status Review' for the CAF region, development of a network of critical sites, a monitoring strategy, and work on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1.

279. All of these activities were very strongly focused on synergies between AEWA and CAF by making use of existing expertise and not duplicating efforts.

280. Russia supported the position of Armenia. It would be impossible for governments to support the same work twice. For this reason, it would not be possible for Russia to provide official support for the CAF Action Plan until there was clarity over institutional arrangements for its implementation. The Russian Federation supported the concept of AEWA being responsible for the CAF Action Plan, rather than establishing a new and overlapping mechanism.

281. Taking note of Russia's concerns, The Netherlands strongly encouraged the Russian Federation to become a Contracting Party to AEWA. The Netherlands recalled the Russian-Dutch seminar on 15 years of environmental cooperation (September 2007, Moscow), during which Wetlands International had made a presentation on the needs for cooperation between Western Europe and Russia regarding migratory birds, also highlighting the importance of AEWA.

282. The Chair asked the Secretariat to do everything necessary to optimise the situation and to achieve the maximum possible synergy, also with regard to financial aspects.

Agenda item 32. Reports of Sessional Committees

283. Brief reports were presented by the Chairs of the two Working Groups established to review the draft Resolutions and other substantive MOP4 documentation.

284. The Vice-Chair from Switzerland, speaking as Chair of the Working Group on Technical & Scientific Matters, commended the good spirit in which the Group's work had been conducted during the session held from 14.30 to 18.30 on 17 September. The Working Group had dealt with nine Resolutions and had identified only a few pending points to be dealt with either by the Secretariat when preparing revised drafts, or during today's Plenary Session.

285. The Vice-Chair from Senegal, speaking as Chair of the Working Group on Financial & Administrative Matters, listed the documents reviewed by the Working Group during three sessions held on 17 and 18 September. There had been some very challenging issues to deal with and thanks were due to members of the Working Group for their commitment and to the Secretariat for their efficient support.

Agenda item 33. Adoption of the Resolutions and Amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement

286. The Executive Secretary introduced the list of draft Resolutions for adoption, noting which were being submitted in their original form and which were being tabled as first or second revisions:

AEWA Res. 4.1 Rev.2	Phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands
AEWA Res. 4.2 Rev.1	Responding to the need to improve knowledge of the status and factors causing declines of some waterbird populations
AEWA Res. 4.3 Rev.2	Hunting and trade legislation
AEWA Res. 4.4 Rev.1	Developing international best practice for the conservation of threatened waterbirds through action planning and re-establishment
AEWA Res. 4.5 Rev.1	Introduced non-native waterbird species in the Agreement area
AEWA Res. 4.6 Rev.1	Establishment of an Implementation Review Process
AEWA Res. 4.7 Rev.1	Adoption of Strategic Plan 2009-2017 and online National Report Format
AEWA Res. 4.8 Rev.1	Financial and Administrative Matters and Annexes
AEWA Res. 4.9 Rev.1	African Initiative for the conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa ²
AEWA Res. 4.10 Rev.1	AEWA International Implementation Priorities for 2009-2012
AEWA Res. 4.11 Rev.1	Amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement
AEWA Res. 4.12	Adoption of guidance for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan
AEWA Res. 4.13	Procedure for submission of proposals to amend the Annexes to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds
AEWA Res. 4.14	Adoption of Conservation Guidelines
AEWA Res. 4.15 Rev.1	The effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds
AEWA Res. 4.16 Corr.1 Rev.1	Responding to the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1
AEWA Res. 4.17	Adoption and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans
AEWA Res. 4.18	Institutional Arrangements: Standing Committee
AEWA Res. 4.19	Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee
AEWA Res. 4.20	Tribute to the Organisers
AEWA Res. 4.21	Date, venue and funding of the Fifth Session of the Meeting of the Parties

287. The Chair requested the Secretariat to introduce the draft Resolutions one by one. Following each introduction, the Chair invited delegates to make comments and/or to propose final amendments, before asking the meeting to signal its adoption (or not) of the Resolution concerned.

AEWA Res. 4.1 Rev.2 Phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands

288. Referring to operational paragraph 3, the European Commission requested that the date of 30 September 2009, shown as a deletion in Rev.2, should be reinstated.

289. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendment requested by the European Commission.

AEWA Res. 4.2 Rev.1 Responding to the need to improve knowledge of the status and factors causing declines of some waterbird populations

290. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, without further amendment.

AEWA Res. 4.3 Rev.2 Hunting and trade legislation

291. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, without further amendment.

² This item was originally focused on the conservation of the Great Rift Valley.

AEWA Res. 4.4 Rev.1 Developing international best practice for the conservation of threatened waterbirds through action planning and re-establishment

292. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, without further amendment.

AEWA Res. 4.5 Rev.1 Introduced non-native waterbird species in the Agreement area

293. France proposed an amendment to operative paragraph 14, which would read (amended wording underlined): “Further urges France and any other Party where the species is present as a non-native species to undertake urgent measures....”.

294. Germany and the UK noted that the EU coordination mechanism had agreed the following replacement text for operative paragraph 7: “Requests Contracting Parties to consider better recording and monitoring of avicultural collections of non-native waterfowl.” The remainder of the paragraph would be deleted.

295. Norway considered that “waterbird” would be a more appropriate term than “waterfowl” in the amended text of operative paragraph 7.

296. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendments proposed by France, Germany/UK and Norway.

AEWA Res. 4.6 Rev.1 Establishment of an Implementation Review Process³

297. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, without further amendment.

AEWA Res. 4.7 Rev.1 Adoption of Strategic Plan 2009-2017 and online National Report Format

298. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, made a statement and requested its inclusion in the Report of the MOP. The EU considered that there should be no confusion between the work of consultants and work carried out by the Standing Committee and the Meeting of Parties. Some amendments would therefore be required to Appendix 1 to Resolution 4.7 to remove unnecessary references to the consultants involved with its preparation.

299. Referring to operational paragraph 13, the UK proposed amending the final part of the paragraph to read (amendment underlined): “...via the online national reporting facility and take into account feedback obtained from Contracting Parties based on...”.

300. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendment proposed by France (on behalf of the EU) and the UK.

AEWA Res. 4.8 Rev.1 Financial and Administrative Matters and Annexes

301. In response to a question from Niger, the Executive Secretary clarified that the budget proposal was based on MOP5 being held in 2012. However, the Secretariat and Standing Committee would seek to identify a window for organising the meeting as early as possible in 2012, so that the interval between MOP4 and MOP5 was not too long, while permitting the budgetary advantages of deferring MOP5 expenditure to the 2012 financial year. A clarification to this effect could be inserted into draft Resolution 4.21 concerning the date and venue of MOP5.

302. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, without further amendment.

AEWA Res. 4.9 Rev.1 African Initiative for the conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats in Africa

³ In conformity with discussions during earlier Plenary Sessions, the title of this Resolution was amended from “Establishment of an Implementation Review Panel” to “Establishment of an Implementation Review Process”.

303. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, without further amendment.

304. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, welcomed the fact that the budget and the African Initiative had been approved in consecutive Resolutions. These represented two extremely important steps for the Agreement and thanks were due to all those who had worked hard to ensure that both Resolutions could be adopted. It was especially encouraging to see a strengthening of support for AEWA implementation in Africa.

305. The African Union also congratulated the meeting on the adoption of Resolution 4.9 and subscribed to the comments of France. All African states that had yet to join AEWA as a Contracting Party were strongly encouraged to do so.

AEWA Res. 4.10 Rev.1 AEWA International Implementation Priorities for 2009-2012

306. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, noted that some Parties, especially those from Africa had comments on the prioritisation indicated in the draft Resolution. The EU therefore suggested that the title should be amended to read “International Implementation Tasks for 2009-2016”, with the proposed dates indicating the validity of the list of tasks for two intersessional periods.

307. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendment proposed by France (on behalf of the EU).

AEWA Res. 4.11 Rev.1 Amendments to the Annexes to the Agreement

308. The European Commission welcomed the amendments that had already been introduced in Rev. 1, but proposed a further amendment to operational paragraph 8(c), which should read:

“In the light of the development of terminology used by IUCN for Red Data Lists, to review, as a matter of priority, the applicability of the threat criteria, especially the Near Threatened IUCN Category, to the listing of populations in Table 1 and to present options for the amendment of Table 1 to be considered at the 5th Session of the Meeting of Parties”.

309. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States made a statement for the record. The countries of the EU had acceded in all good faith to the Agreement, recognising that elements of its implementation were technically complex. To this end, a certain degree of stability of the Agreement over time was needed. If the Technical Committee felt the need to review the Tables contained in the Annexes to the Agreement, it was important to recognise that such reviews could raise issues of political significance and not only those of a technical nature.⁴ Therefore, in reaching final decisions about possible amendments to the Tables, the Parties would have to take a variety of factors into account.

310. In connection with implications of Near Threatened status for Table 1 listing, BirdLife International noted that it had raised the matter for the attention of the Meeting on the spur of the moment. BirdLife was aware of the difficulty and complexity of this issue and looked forward to working on it with colleagues from the Technical Committee during the coming quadriennium.

311. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendment proposed by the European Commission.

AEWA Res. 4.12 Adoption of guidance for interpretation of criteria used in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan

312. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, without amendment.

⁴ BirdLife International had suggested amendments to the status of populations listed in Table 1 in the frame of the technical and scientific working group session.

AEWA Res. 4.13 Procedure for submission of proposals to amend the Annexes to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds

313. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, questioned the need for this Resolution, believing the substitution of the Standing Committee in place of the Contracting Parties to be unhelpful.

314. The Executive Secretary recommended withdrawal of this Resolution but noted that further information on the issues it covered might be conveyed to MOP5. The Secretariat had encountered a series of problems in obtaining proposals from Contracting Parties for MOP4 and such problems could be expected to arise again in future.

315. The Resolution was withdrawn by consensus.

AEWA Res. 4.14 Adoption of Conservation Guidelines

316. This Resolution was adopted by consensus, without amendment.

AEWA Res. 4.15 Rev.1 The effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds

317. Guinea-Bissau proposed an amendment to the end of the seventh preambular paragraph, which would read: "...and seasonal wetlands in arid, semi-arid and sub-arid regions;".

318. The Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States particularly welcomed operational paragraphs 4, 5 and 6. These needed to be considered and implemented in combination, in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness of the Agreement. Furthermore consistency between these wordings and the recently adopted wordings in the Strategic Plan were proposed.

319. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendment proposed by Guinea-Bissau.

AEWA Res. 4.16 Corr.1 Rev.1 Responding to the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1

320. Guinea-Bissau, supported by the African Union, Guinea and Mali, proposed an amendment to operational paragraph 3 to read: "...Ministries responsible for agriculture, livestock, environment and health..."; and to operational paragraph 9, to read: "...linkages with agricultural and livestock ministries and ensuring...".

321. The UK, referring to discussions in the MOP4 Technical & Scientific Working Group clarified that the Annexes remained an integral part of Res. 4.16 Corr.1 Rev.1. However, as the Annexes were unamended they had presumably not been redistributed to delegates in the interests of reducing paper consumption.

322. In response to a point raised by the African Union, the UK noted that operational paragraph 1 made it clear that the resolution applied to all relevant agencies.

323. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendments proposed by Guinea-Bissau.

AEWA Res. 4.17 Adoption and implementation of International Single Species Action Plans

324. The Secretariat summarised conclusions of the MOP4 Technical & Scientific Working Group with regard to each of the Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) covered by the draft Resolution:

- Lesser Flamingo – no amendments arising from the Working Group.
- Eurasian Spoonbill – a few technical amendments proposed by the Working Group; all incorporated.
- Black-tailed Godwit – a few technical amendments proposed by the Working Group; all incorporated.

- Lesser White-fronted Goose – after discussion in the Working Group there had been further informal consultations among the Range States; the Secretariat understood the SSAP was now ready for adoption.
- Maccoa Duck – no amendments arising from the Working Group.
- White-winged Flufftail – no amendments arising from the Working Group.
- Madagascar Pond-Heron – no amendments arising from the Working Group.

325. Referring to the revised Executive Summary for the Lesser White-fronted Goose SSAP, Norway proposed deleting the final sentence reading: “The outcome of such reviews should be reflected in future revisions of this Action Plan” (p.5 in the English text). The basis for this proposal was questioned by Sweden and following further informal discussions requested by the Chair, France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, tabled the following consensus amendment to the sentence that Norway had wished to delete: “Any future version of the Action Plan should take note of any new information arising from these reviews as well as any other relevant information”.

326. The European Commission considered it very important to point out for the record of the meeting that if there was to be significant investment of effort and money in reviews of outstanding issues, then the findings of such reviews would have to be taken into account in any future updates of the Action Plan. This did not mean pre-judging the outcomes of such reviews, which should be science-based.

327. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, was happy that the long and often difficult work required to prepare the seven SSAPs was now reaching fruition and that the Range States could get on with the implementation phase. The SSAPs could certainly be amended as necessary in the future, but the documents tabled for adoption were really the basis for what had to be done. In the case of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, the threats facing the species were so severe that it was urgent to have an agreed Action Plan even if the details were not perfect for everyone. The EU wished to propose two small modifications to page 14 of the English text:

- In the ninth and tenth lines of the paragraph commencing “On 20 October 2005”, the following text contained should be deleted: “(a) restrictions on bird movements in response to concerns about the spread of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza (T. Larsson pers. comm.) and (b) due to”.
- The eleventh line of the paragraph commencing “Following consultations in 2006 and 2007 between the German government...”, should be amended to read: “...purity of captive German-bred birds is still not given...”.

328. Germany proposed an additional small amendment to the sixth line of the paragraph commencing “Following consultations in 2006 and 2007 between the German government...”, to read: “...Russian birds, or to seek international acceptance...”

329. Sweden made the following national statement and requested its inclusion in the report of the meeting:

“Although Sweden is not happy about the suggested compromise proposal, we will not stand in the way for the adoption of the Single Species Action Plan. We consider it to be of major importance for the international conservation work for this threatened species. To further show our commitment on this issue, Sweden has contributed with funds for the finalisation of the Single Species Action Plan. Sweden regrets that our provided evidence-based data on the national status of the species (including validated field observations and reference to National Species Red-lists) has not been accepted and incorporated into the Single Species Action Plan, nor their implications namely that the Swedish population is Supplemented according to IUCN Guidelines and that the population should be included in the definition of the Wild Fennoscandian population.”

330. With regard to the SSAP for Eurasian Spoonbill, Germany pointed out that it had yet to see the revisions introduced to the text following discussions of the Technical & Scientific Working Group. Germany therefore reserved the right to come back to that Action Plan if something appeared to be missing.

331. Mauritania called for the Eurasian Spoonbill SSAP to take into account the poor breeding-success of this species in the Banc d'Arguin⁵.

332. Referring to Annex 7 of the Eurasian Spoonbill SSAP, the European Commission recalled that it had tabled an amendment during the Technical & Scientific Working Group, but noted that the amendment had not yet been included. This related to the addition of a column on Special Protection Areas, the highest level of protection available in the EU. A similar amendment should be made to the SSAPs for other relevant species and in the revised format for future SSAPs.

333. OMPO raised concerns with regard to the SSAP for Black-tailed Godwit, specifically in relation to use of the term “illegal hunting” and the issue of compensation for fishing communities in Africa that OMPO considered could suffer from restrictions on fishing.

334. Mali, Senegal, the African Union and the Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs (FNC), also voiced concerns about the practicality of the SSAP in relation to controls on fishing in parts of Africa. The FNC considered that it was more important to reduce predation on the breeding grounds.

335. The Secretariat recalled that all SSAPs were rolling documents that could be revised as new information came to light. If we were to enter into the details of all the points raised, it would be necessary to postpone the whole Action Plan until the next MOP.

336. The European Commission expressed regret that the debate has been re-opened so late in the day, noting that the SSAP for Black-tailed Godwit had been in preparation for some time. There was already an EU Action Plan for this species, and the AEWA SSAP essentially represented an extension of the EU Plan. That was why the European Commission believed that a hunting moratorium was important, as supported by France and other Member States. Issues concerning predation on the breeding grounds and hunting and fishing in Africa should be examined but it would be a tragedy not to approve the SSAP today. The Commission therefore suggested moving forward, while taking note of the concerns expressed by African states and others.

337. Nigeria referred to the AEWA initiative for Africa adopted through Resolution 4.9 and suggested that controversial issues within the SSAP could be dealt with in this framework.

338. The Chair concluded that the Black-tailed Godwit Action Plan should go forward for adoption, but that the concerns of African delegates should be taken into account. The Technical Committee, in close liaison with the Africa initiative, should be asked to deal with these concerns.

339. The Secretariat suggested adding a sixth operational paragraph to the Resolution to read: “Requests the Technical Committee to examine the open and/or controversial issues in the SSAPs identified at MOP4 and to propose appropriate revisions to the SSAPs for consideration and adoption by MOP5”.

340. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to incorporation of the amendment proposed by the Secretariat (adding an operative paragraph to the text of the Resolution itself) and subject to incorporation of the agreed amendments to the text of the individual SSAPs for:

- Eurasian Spoonbill (amendment proposed by the European Commission concerning Annex 7)
- Lesser White-fronted Goose (amendments proposed by France, on behalf of the EU, and by Germany).

341. The meeting also noted the national statement of Sweden in relation to the SSAP for Lesser White-fronted Goose, and that a number of open issues within the SSAP for Black-tailed Godwit would be referred to the Technical Committee and the new AEWA African Initiative.

⁵ This comment refers to the endemic sub-species *Platalea leucorodia balsaci*.

AEWA Res. 4.18 Institutional Arrangements: Standing Committee

342. The Executive Secretary noted that in the last preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 5, the word “Panel” should be replaced with “Process”.

343. The following nominations had been received for inclusion in operative paragraph 1:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
Europe and Central Asia	Norway	Ukraine
Middle East and North Africa	Syria	Tunisia
Western and Central Africa	Ghana	Equatorial Guinea
Eastern and Southern Africa	Uganda	Madagascar

344. In response to a point of clarification raised by Guinea-Bissau, the Executive Secretary confirmed that the Standing Committee would meet once every two years.

345. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to inclusion of the amendment proposed by the Secretariat and the inclusion of the above list of nominees in operational paragraph 1.

AEWA Res. 4.19 Institutional Arrangements: Technical Committee

346. The Secretariat noted that several small amendments were to be included as a consequence of discussion under Agenda item 30. These related to Rule 6.2 and a change to the name of the Alternate for Wetlands International in Appendix I. In addition, “(UK)” should be added after the name of Mr. David Stroud, the nominated Regional Representative for North and Southwestern Europe in Appendix I.

347. Several delegates proposed names for inclusion in Appendix I; however, the Secretariat reiterated two key principles:

- Members of the Technical Committee were appointed in their individual expert capacity, not as representatives of their country of origin;
- No name could be included in Appendix I until the individual concerned had been contacted and given a clear signal of their agreement to be nominated.

Unfortunately, none of the additional nominations suggested by delegates conformed to both of these principles.

348. Croatia pointed out errors in the cross-references between rules of the *Modus operandi* for the Technical Committee (Appendix II). The reference to Rule 12 in Rule 19 should refer to Rule 17; and the reference to Rule 18 in Rule 25 should refer to Rule 24.

349. The Resolution was adopted by consensus, subject to inclusion of the amendments summarised by the Secretariat and the corrections pointed out by Croatia. None of the positions indicated as “Vacant” in Appendix I of draft Resolution 4.19 had been filled at the time of final adoption of the Resolution. It was agreed that the Secretariat will take the necessary steps to fill in the vacancies.

AEWA Res. 4.20 Tribute to the Organisers

350. The Executive Secretary introduced this as one of the most important Resolutions before the MOP and commended it to delegates, expressing particular thanks to the Government of Madagascar and all those governments and organisations listed in the preambular paragraphs.

351. France, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, believed that everyone present would wish to subscribe to this Resolution. Thanks were also due to the Secretariat, the Chair and Vice-Chairs, all of whom had contributed decisively to resolving difficult issues.

352. The African Union (AU), speaking on behalf of African delegates, voiced strong support for the Resolution and pledged that the AU would encourage African states to join AEWA and to implement rapidly

the Resolutions adopted by MOP4. Warm congratulations were due to the Government of Madagascar for hosting the MOP.

353. The Resolution was adopted by acclamation.

354. Madagascar expressed its appreciation of the cooperation shown by the AEWA Secretariat and many other partners. Delegates were thanked for their constructive participation and wished a safe and pleasant journey home.

AEWA Res. 4.21 Date, venue and funding of the Fifth Session of the Meeting of the Parties

355. The Executive Secretary recommended that MOP5 be held early in 2012. This would require a small amendment to the first operational paragraph. The exact timing would be dependent on the timing of COP11 of the Ramsar Convention, since it was vital that synergies between AEWA and Ramsar be maximised. To date, no formal offer to host MOP5 had been forthcoming.

356. France expressed pleasure in offering its candidacy to host MOP5, noting that if the invitation were to be accepted, the meeting would not take place in Paris, but would most likely be held somewhere on the French coastline.

357. The announcement made by France was greeted by acclamation.

Agenda item 34. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting

358. The Executive Secretary drew attention to the fact that a draft Report covering the first three days of MOP4 had been distributed to delegates in both official languages. The draft report of the fourth and final day would be available shortly from the AEWA website. Written comments were invited and these should reach the Secretariat within two weeks of the close of the meeting.

Agenda item 35. Date and Venue of the 5th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

359. As agreed through Adoption of Resolution 4.21 under Agenda item 33, MO5 will take place as early as possible in 2012, subject to the requirement for maximum synergy with the timing of COP11 of the Ramsar Convention, and subject to negotiations with the Government of France as the Host of MOP5.

Agenda item 36. Any Other Business

360. The Vice-Chairman from Senegal presented a brief report on the two-day workshop on negotiation skills held on 13-14 September 2008, organised by the AEWA Secretariat, in close cooperation with UNEP, and conducted by Elizabeth Mrema and Abdoulaye Ndiaye. The focus had been English-speaking African countries, with the aim of strengthening and sharpening skills for effective negotiation within MEAs. Among the topics covered had been:

- National negotiating positions and strategies;
- Effective national preparation and planning for negotiations;
- Effective participation and conduct of negotiations;
- National follow-up on outcomes of negotiations; and
- Managing expectations and achievements.

361. Thanks were due to the Governments of Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, through contributions to UNEP/DELIC.

362. A similar workshop would be held for francophone participants prior to the next MOP.

363. France thanked everybody involved in efforts to strengthen AEWA for the future, including in the context of budget negotiations and recognition of the measures needed to reach out linguistically. Environmental issues were often treated as ‘second rung’, yet the committed participation of so many delegates at MOP4 had been a highly encouraging sign.

364. The representative of the African Union thanked English-speaking African countries for their support and expressed the hope that all of Africa could meet with one voice at future MOPs.

Agenda item 37. Closure of the Meeting

365. The Closing ceremony was presided over by His Excellency the Minister of Environment, Forests and Tourism of Madagascar.

366. The Executive Secretary recalled the decision taken three years previously to hold MOP4 in Madagascar and expressed his gratitude to the Government of Madagascar and to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Tourism (MEFT), in particular, for their support in making the meeting a great success. As well as to the Minister himself, thanks were due to the Secretary General of MEFT for Chairing the MOP4 Task Force responsible for organising the meeting, including logistics, side events and excursions. Special thanks also went to the AEWA Secretariat’s day-to-day focal point in MEFT and to the Ministry of Interior for assisting with visa formalities and other matters. AEWA was also extremely grateful to all of those governments and organisations that had contributed financially to the meeting⁶. More than 100 people had worked hard behind the scenes to make the meeting happen, including representatives of local NGOs⁷. The management of the Carlton Hotel had assisted in many ways and the interpretation team had been indispensable as always.

367. His Excellency the Minister of Environment, Forests and Tourism congratulated delegates on the hard work accomplished during MOP4 and noted that the meeting had been characterised by an open exchange of views and had resulted in very broad consensus. Perhaps participants had been inspired by the magic air in Madagascar! The Minister expressed his personal conviction that migratory birds could be important ambassadors for transboundary biodiversity conservation, given that they flew through political and language barriers and did not care who was rich and who was poor. The few days of the MOP had not been long enough for participants to get a complete picture of the efforts being made by the Government of Madagascar on behalf of migratory birds. Though Madagascar was a recent Contracting Party to AEWA, its hosting of MOP4 had been significant at several levels and the country had been proud to host MOP4 here in Antananarivo. All participants were warmly invited to return to see more of Madagascar’s 5,600 km of coastline, one million hectares of lakes and wetlands and six million hectares of protected areas. In closing MOP4, His Excellency wished delegates safe homeward journeys and hoped with all his heart that AEWA would keep on flying at its current high altitude.

368. The closing ceremony concluded with a performance in English, French and Malagasy of a song entitled “Love, Peace and Unity”.

⁶ These are listed in full in Resolution 4.20.

⁷ Also listed in Resolution 4.20.